Local Man™

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LOCAL MAN

VOLUME 2: THE DRY SEASON

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Gold

THE WORLD IS ALREADY CRACKED AND FRAYED.
STRANGE ISLAND HQ
LOS ANGELES.
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, FANTOSIDE TEARING IT APART CAN ONLY BE AN IMPROVEMENT!
OR SHE COULD ANNIHILATE EVERYTHING, CROSSFIRE!
I'M SICK OF YOUR HEATHEN ZEN MALARKY!
THEN, I'M SORRY IT'S COME TO THIS, CAMO TERROR.
BECAUSE, MY FLAMES NEVER MISS!
FWOOSH
RAAGH!
I LOVE YOU, NEON MASQUE.
BUT DON'T THINK I WON'T BURN YOU DOWN TOO.
YOU'RE A DAMN FOOL, GARY!
THE TIME IS AT HAND...

IT ENDS.

SHRRRRRRRRRRPP

NO FUTURE.

ERICA!

DIANA!

NO FUTURE AT ALL.

I'VE SEEN YOU.

YOUR SOUL.

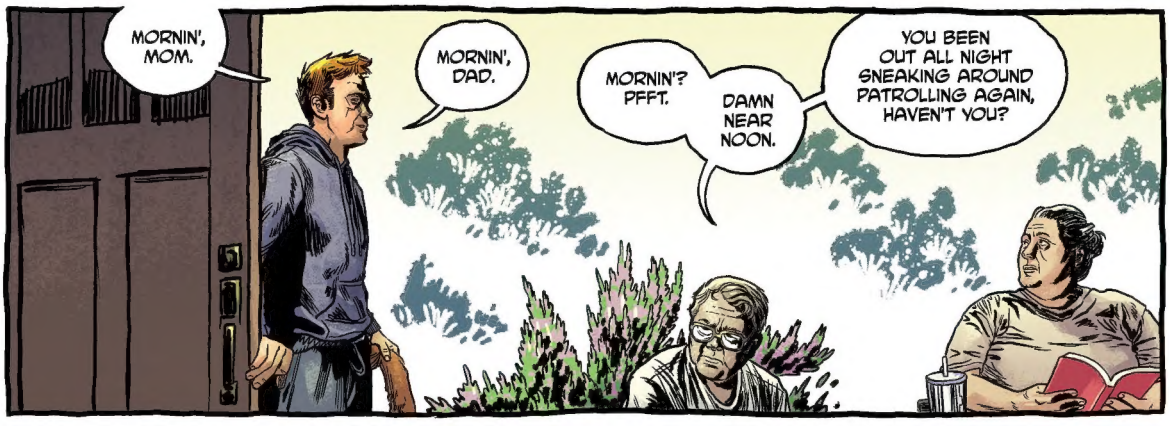
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

WHO THE HELL...

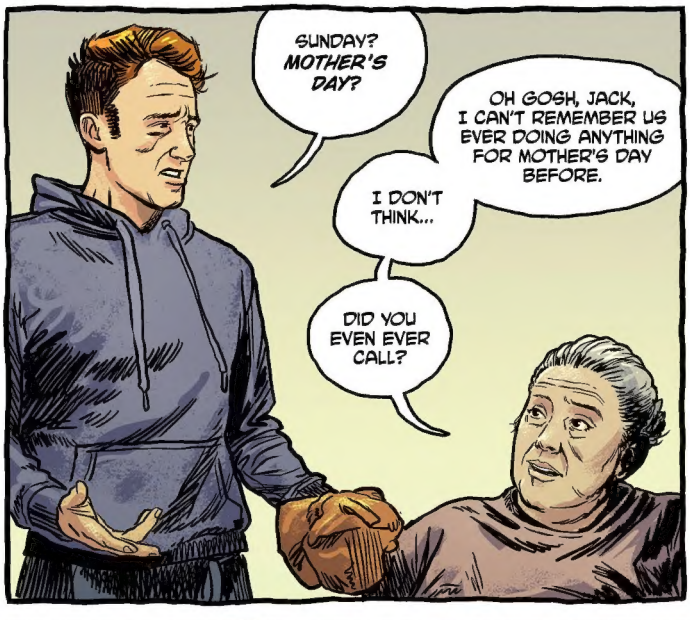
...AM I?

NEXT SERVICES
92 MILES
STREET
APR-16-92
IceMaX
ANTIFREEZE
COOLANT
WEST
94

THE XAVER HOME.
FARMINGTON, WISCONSIN.


MORNIN', MOM.
MORNIN', DAD.
MORNIN'? PFFT.
DAMN NEAR NOON.
YOU BEEN OUT ALL NIGHT SNEAKING AROUND PATROLLING AGAIN, HAVEN'T YOU?

I FIGURED I'D FIGHT CRIME ON FRIDAY, SO I COULD TAKE MOM OUT EARLY FOR HER SPECIAL DAY TOMORROW.
WHAT'S THAT NOW?


SUNDAY? MOTHER'S DAY?
OH GOSH, JACK, I CAN'T REMEMBER US EVER DOING ANYTHING FOR MOTHER'S DAY BEFORE.
I DON'T THINK...
DID YOU EVEN EVER CALL?

WELL, I'M TRYING TO DO BETTER. I'LL GO TO CHURCH WITH YOU.
WE CAN GET BREAKFAST TOO.
THE WHOLE THING, MOM.
I'LL BELIEVE IT WHEN I SEE IT.

WHOOP
WHOOP
RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.
JACK XAVER?
WOOF
WOOF!
PEPPER. COME ON, BOY.
CHIEF BUCHOLZ SAYS YOU NEED TO COME DOWN TO THE STATION.
WOOF!!
BOY, YOU JUST HAD TO GO SNEAKIN' AROUND IN THAT STUPID MASK.
WE DON'T NEED VIGILANTES HERE!
THIS AIN'T CALIFORNIA!
C'MON, KOPECKI! I JUST WOKE UP.
CHIEF SAYS RIGHT NOW.

PEPPER. STAY THIS TIME.
I'M SERIOUS.
STAY.
LOOK, IF THIS IS MORE CAMO CRUSADER STUFF...
WHATEVER YOU THINK ABOUT ME, CHIEF BRIAN AND I HAVE A THING, OKAY?
HIS DEATH, AND ALL THAT, IT'S--
YAH YAH.
THAT'S BETWEEN YOU AND GOD ABOVE.
THIS AIN'T ABOUT THAT. THIS HERE...

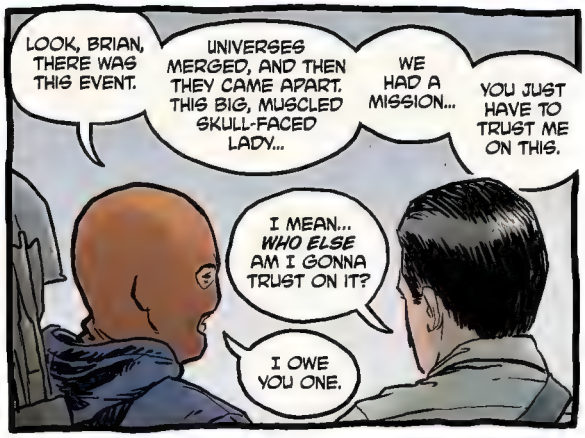
"THIS IS ABOUT YOU."
YOU DON'T SEEM REAL SURPRISED.
NO.
NO, I THINK I KNOW WHAT THIS IS.
HEY, I BROUGHT MUFFIN--

HOLY SHIT. IT'S YOU!

I GUESS YOU BOTH ALREADY KNOW MY WIFE, INGA.
SHE NORMALLY DOESN'T DELIVER FRESH MUFFINS TO THE STATION HERSELF...
SORRY. I HAD TO SEE HIM.
IT'S NOT A CLONE OR A SHAPESHIFTER OR WHATEVER?

NO, IT'S A TIME TRAVEL THING.
MESSES WITH MEMORY, BIG TIME. BUT I THINK IT'S ME FROM TWENTY SOME YEARS AGO.
YEAH. HE'S TOO PERFECT NOT TO BE YOU.

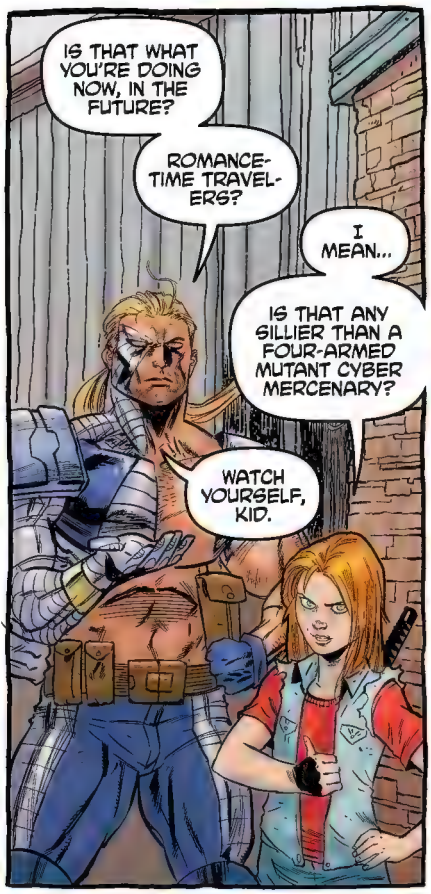
THERE ARE OTHERS HERE TOO, RIGHT?
OUT IN THE BACK LOT.
DIDN'T HAVE ROOM FOR THEM ALL IN HERE, AND I WASN'T REAL SURE I COULD HOLD 'EM IF I WANTED TO.


LOOK, BRIAN, THERE WAS THIS EVENT.
UNIVERSES MERGED, AND THEN THEY CAME APART. THIS BIG, MUSCLED SKULL-FACED LADY...
WE HAD A MISSION...
YOU JUST HAVE TO TRUST ME ON THIS.
I MEAN... *WHO ELSE* AM I GONNA TRUST ON IT?
I OWE YOU ONE.

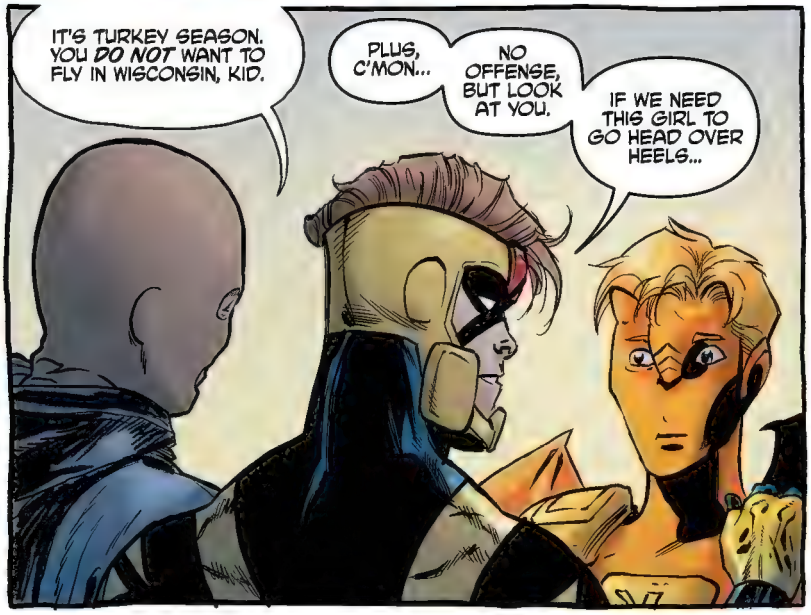
LET'S NOT START THAT AGAIN.
YOU DO YOUR JOB, I'LL DO MINE.
BE CAREFUL OUT THERE, JACK.
...JACKS.
FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

THAT'S ME UNDER THAT MASK, ISN'T IT? ME OF THE FUTURE?
YEAH. IT'S ME.
THIRD GEN'S LAWYERS START MAKING TROUBLE IF I'M SEEN IN COSTUME. YOU SHOULD--
MAN, MY HIGH SCHOOL GIRLFRIEND IS *STILL* CHECKING ME OUT!
ARE-- ARE YOU *STILL* BANGING HER?!
SHE'S MARRIED TO--
DUDE. SHUT THE FUCK--
THAT'S ALL OF US THEN.
FIREBREATHER
PHEW. GLAD YOU ALL MADE IT.
GUYS, THIS OLD CREEP IS ME FROM THE FUTURE.
ME, I'M SURE YOU REMEMBER...
STRYKER
JESSE SANCHEZ, STREET ANGEL
SCRAP FROM DYNAMO 5
BOOF
THIS PLACE SMELLS LIKE SHEEP FUDGE.
OK, SO WE GOT TOSSED INTO THE FUTURE. IF WE WANT OUR UNIVERSE TO SURVIVE THE WAR TO COME, WE NEED TO SQUASH ANY ANOMALIES HERE AND HUSTLE BACK TO OUR OWN TIME ON THE DOUBLE. EVERY UNIT HAS A MISSION.
RIPCLAW'S TEAM HAS TO STOP *DAMIEN DARKLORD*. WHAT'D THE SUPREME GUY GIVE US, CAPTAIN?
TEMPORAL STATIC AIN'T HELPING...
...BUT MY CYBER-COM* SAYS THERE'S A TIME FOLDER ABOUT TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES DUE NORTH OF HERE IN A...
THIS CAN'T BE RIGHT...
*CYBERNETIC-COMMUNICATION IMPLANT.

"...IN A WAL-MART?"
I CAN HELP WHO'S NEXT.
"CYBER-COM SAYS SHE REBOOTS TIME EVERY TIME SHE FALLS IN LOVE..."


IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW, IN THE FUTURE?
ROMANCE-TIME TRAVELERS?
I MEAN...
IS THAT ANY SILLIER THAN A FOUR-ARMED MUTANT CYBER MERCENARY?
WATCH YOURSELF, KID.

TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY MILES IS NO PROBLEM.
OLD MAN JACK HERE CAN JUST CALL UP A GENJET AND---
ACTUALLY, IT'S A LONG STORY, BUT I CAN'T.
I CAN FLY PRETTY FAST.
WHY DON'T I JUST FLY UP AHEAD, FIND THIS GIRL...
I COULD ROMANCE HER. AND...


IT'S TURKEY SEASON. YOU DO NOT WANT TO FLY IN WISCONSIN, KID.
PLUS, C'MON...
NO OFFENSE, BUT LOOK AT YOU.
IF WE NEED THIS GIRL TO GO HEAD OVER HEELS...

...IT'S GOTTA BE ME, RIGHT?
OH...

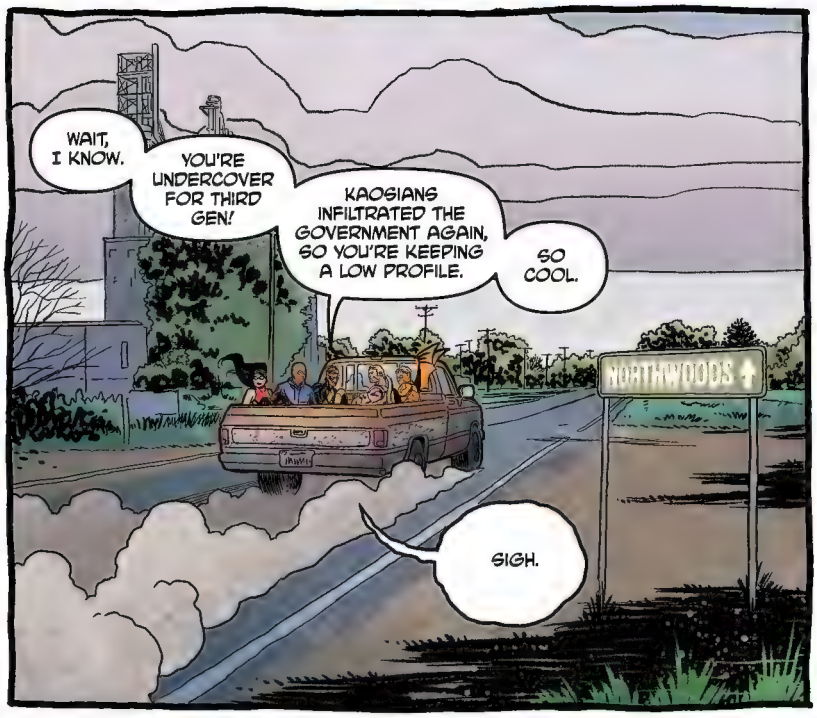
JACK XAVER?
WOAH, WHERE'D THIS GUY COME FROM?
DID THIRDGEN SEND--
I CALLED HIM FROM AN APP ON MY PHONE.
THIS FUTURE IS AMAZING.
IS IT?
THEY INVENTED TAXIS.
LET ME KNOW WHEN HE CALLS UP A SPACE-SHIP.
I HAD A SPACE SHIP.
OH, YOU DID NOT!
HOLD ON, XAVER!
I DON'T CARE WHAT THE FARE IS...
...I'M NOT GETTING INTO ANY MORE WEIRDO SUPERHERO SHIT WITH YOU!
FUCK CROSS--
WACK!
GAH!
I'M DRIVING. YOU WANNA CO-PILOT?
FRICK YEAH!
SKILLIN' N' THRILLIN'!

SONNOVABITCH--!
EAT SHIT, RETARD!
JESUS.
WE'RE SORRY!

DUDE, YOU CAN'T CALL PEOPLE RETARD.
OW! WHY!?
AND WHY ARE YOU BACK IN FARMINGTON OF ALL PLACES?
WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?

LIFE HAPPENED.
LOOK, FOR THIS MISSION, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED THE TIMELINE TO BE AS STRONG AS POSSIBLE.
THE LAST THING WE NEED IS PARADOX STUFF BETWEEN YOU AND ME, OKAY?
SO NO MORE TALKING ABOUT IT.

IN THE MEANTIME, THOUGH, CAN YOU JUST BE, I DUNNO... LESS "YOU"?
LESS US.
NO. I'M NOT LIKE YOU.

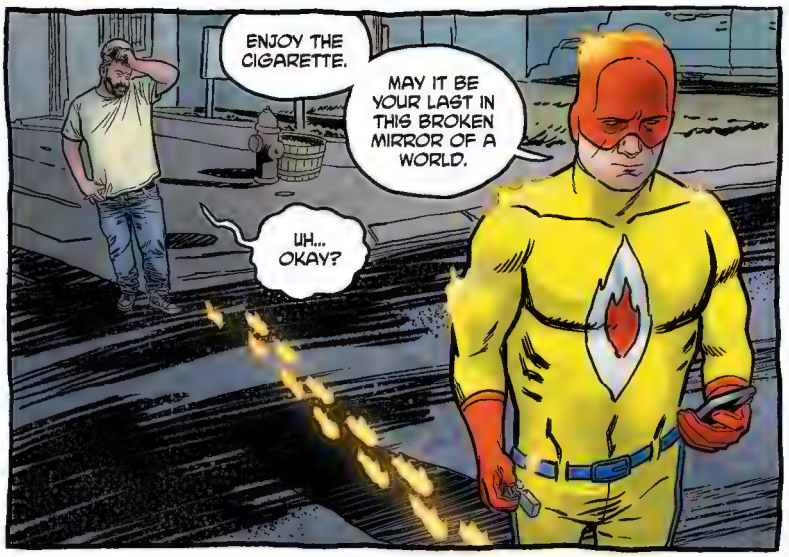

WAIT, I KNOW.
YOU'RE UNDERCOVER FOR THIRD GEN!
KAOSIANS INFILTRATED THE GOVERNMENT AGAIN, SO YOU'RE KEEPING A LOW PROFILE.
SO COOL.
NORTHWOODS
SIGH.

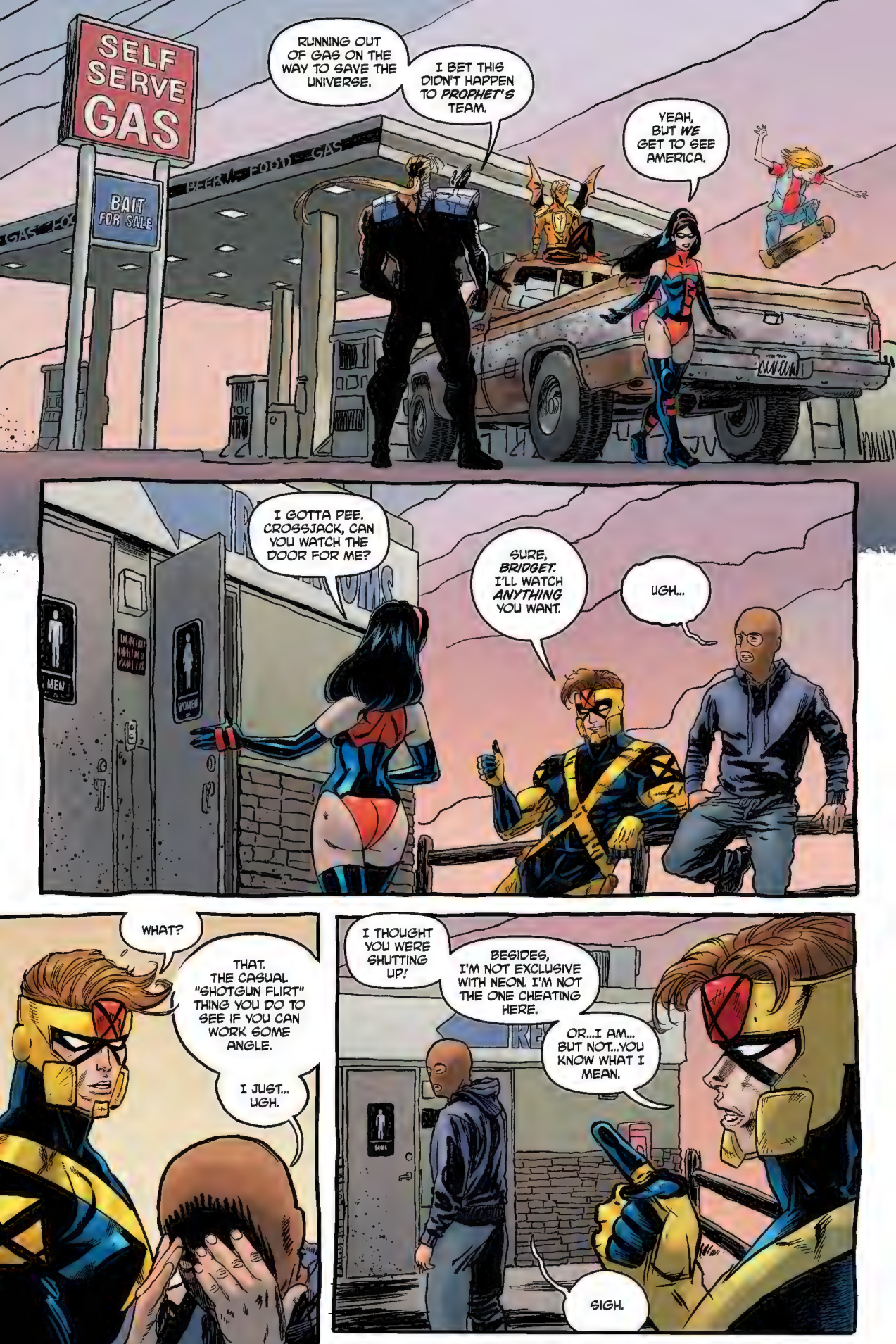
HNH.
WELL, AT LEAST THE METER'S STILL RUNNING.
FARMINGTO
POLICE DEPARTM
POLICE
POLICE

FLK

JESUS CHRIST!
I SENSE HE'S BEEN HERE!
WHERE!
WHERE IS THE BOY?! CROSSJACK?
FWOOOOSH!

HERE, MAN!
HE'S HERE!
TAKE THE PHONE!
OH. YES. I'M...I'M SORRY.
IT'S JUST...
I KNOW THIS MAN, AND WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF.


ENJOY THE CIGARETTE.
MAY IT BE YOUR LAST IN THIS BROKEN MIRROR OF A WORLD.
UH... OKAY?

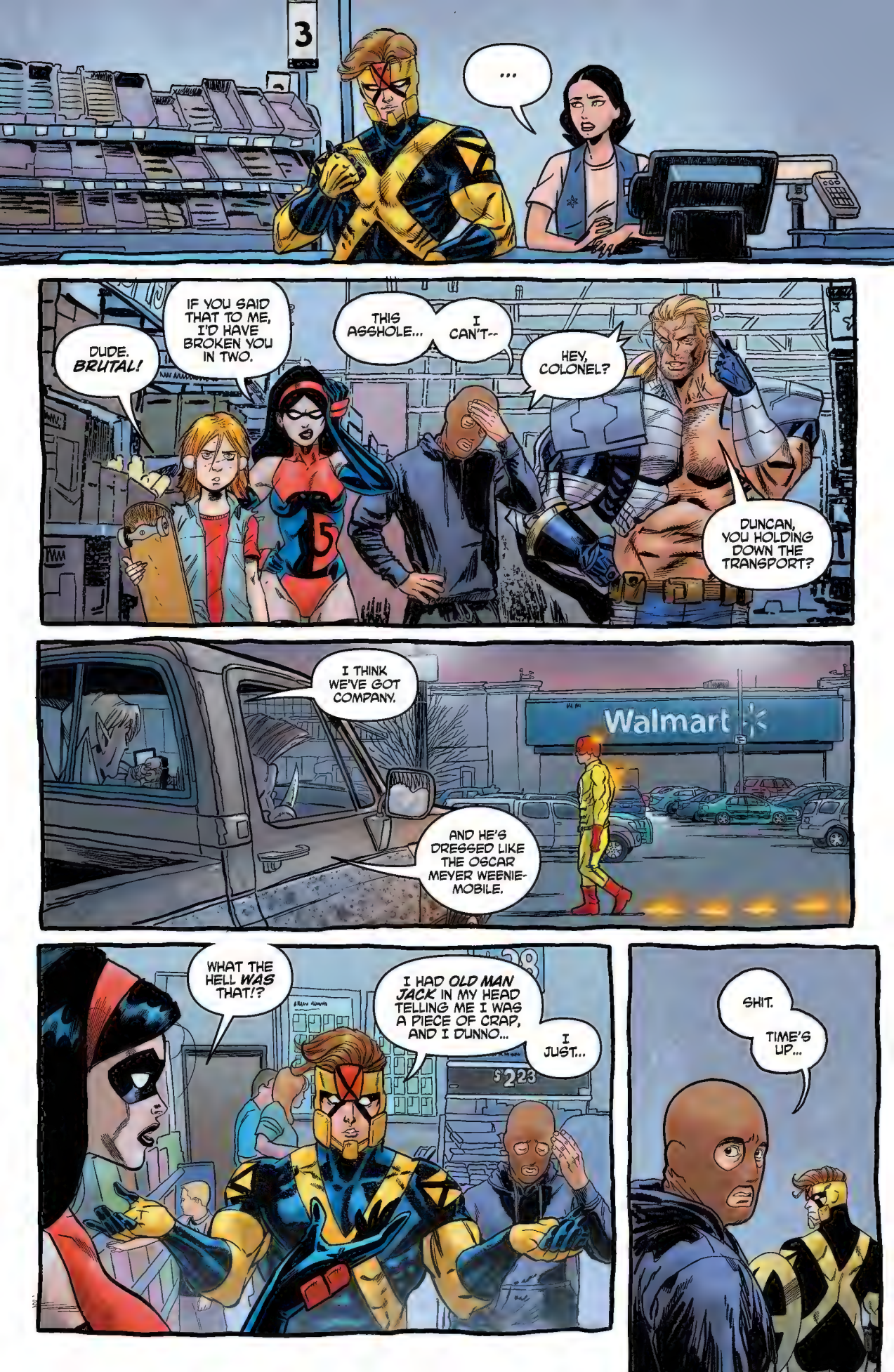

SELF SERVE GAS
BAIT FOR SALE
RUNNING OUT OF GAS ON THE WAY TO SAVE THE UNIVERSE.
I BET THIS DIDN'T HAPPEN TO PROPHET'S TEAM.
YEAH, BUT WE GET TO SEE AMERICA.
I GOTTA PEE. CROSSJACK, CAN YOU WATCH THE DOOR FOR ME?
SURE, BRIDGET. I'LL WATCH ANYTHING YOU WANT.
UGH...
MEN
WOMEN
WHAT?
THAT. THE CASUAL "SHOTGUN FLIRT" THING YOU DO TO SEE IF YOU CAN WORK SOME ANGLE.
I JUST... UGH.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SHUTTING UP!
BESIDES, I'M NOT EXCLUSIVE WITH NEON. I'M NOT THE ONE CHEATING HERE.
OR...I AM... BUT NOT...YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
SIGH.

SO, YOU'RE NOT WITH THIRD GEN ANYMORE HUH?
YEAH. ARE YOU GONNA ASK HOW DYNAMO 5 IS DOING IN THE FUTURE?
BECAUSE I'M TRYING TO AVOID PARADOXES.
WOMEN
NO WORRIES. I ALREADY KNOW.
WE ARGUE. WE FIGHT. BUT WE'RE FAMILY; ALL VARIATIONS ON THE SAME THEME, SO WE ACCEPT EACH OTHER.
YOU SHOULD TRY IT.
I'M STARTING TO LIKE THE FUTURE!
THEY GOT FREE BUBBLE GUM IN THOSE BOXES IN THE BATHROOM!
HAHA
DUDE, YOU'RE AWESOME.
WANNA TRY MY BOARD?
OH. WAIT...
BOOF DOESN'T TRY THINGS, KID! HE RULES THEM!
I REMEMBER THIS NEXT PART--!
WHAT--?!
DUNCAN!
GET DOWN!
BRAAAAAAP

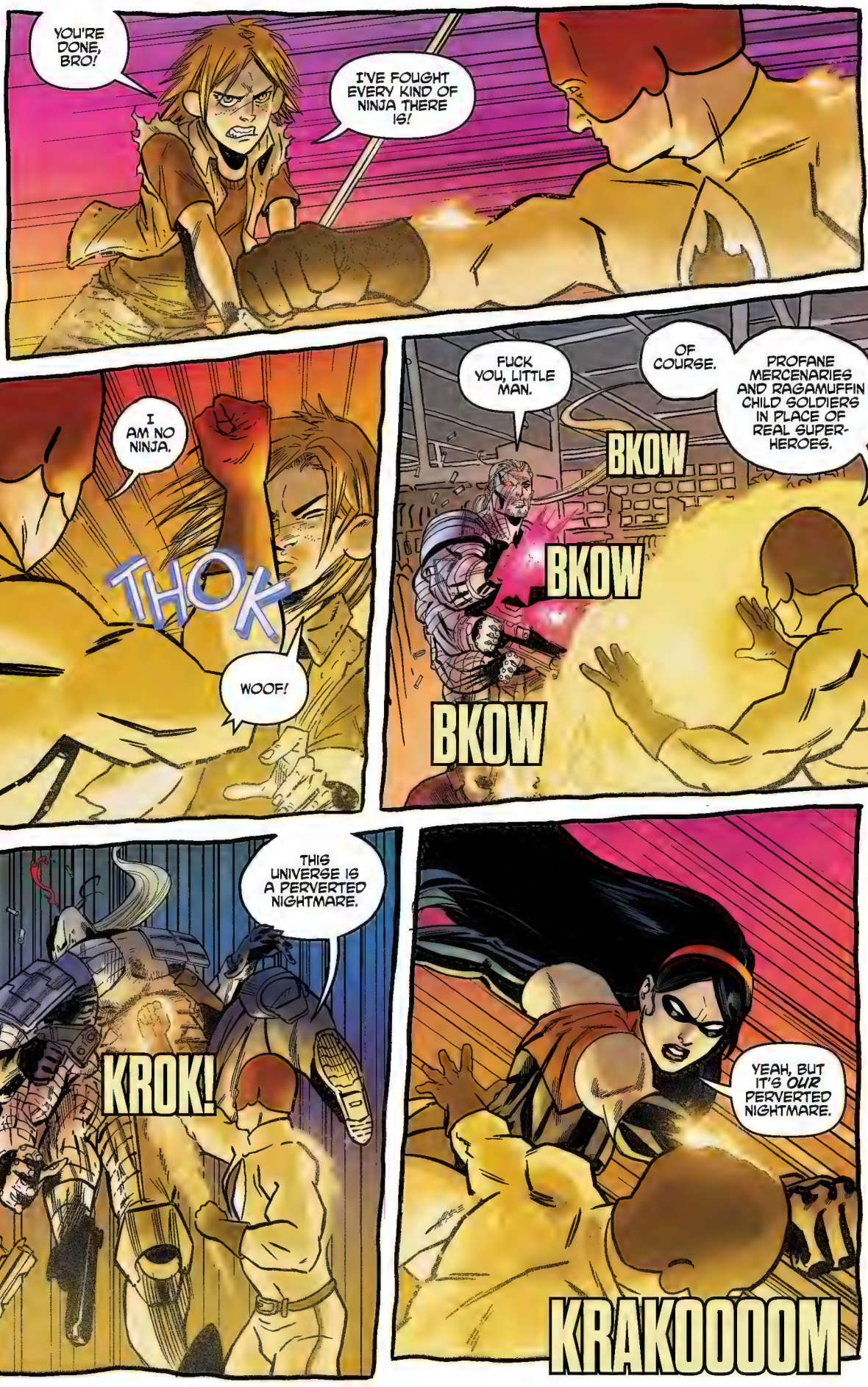
FUCKIN' LIZARD PEOPLE!
I KNEW YOU WERE COMING! SAW IT ON THE NEWS!
YOU AREN'T GETTING ANY ADRENOCHROME OUTTA ME!
PREMIUM
PREMIUM
I'VE GOT THIS!
NO. DON'T.
LET'S JUST GO.
RUN!
RUN, YOU GODDAMN TERRORISTS!
"SEE AMERICA," HUH?
ADRENO-CHROME? WHAT... WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WORLD?
IT'S A MESS. EVERYONE JUST FUCKED IT UP.
I SPEND ALL MY TIME TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR PAST MISTAKES AND...
AND I JUST...
WHAT!?
WHAT DID I DO?!
WHAT DIDN'T YOU DO!?
YOU KNOW YOU NEVER TOOK MOM OUT FOR MOTHER'S DAY??
YOU NEVER SENT FLOWERS!
YOU NEVER EVEN CALLED!!
WHAT KINDA FUDGE-LOVIN' HUMP DOESN'T SEND HIS MAMA FLOWERS ON MOTHER'S DAY?

WOULDA' HAD HIM.
WOULDA' KILLED THAT VIPER IF NOT FOR THE SHIELD GUY...
SO HE'S BEEN HERE.
REGULAR
TING
TING
AHHHH!
BRAAAP
WOOMF
PREMIUM
AH! NO!
HELP!!
I COULD ABSORB THIS FIRE. SAVE YOUR LIFE.
BUT SOON YOUR WORLD WILL BE NOTHING BUT A MEMORY.
JUST A SHADOW ON THE WALL CAST BY THE GREAT FLAME THAT BURNS AT THE HEART OF ALL.
AND I MUST CONSERVE MY STRENGTH.
BAIT FOR SALE
AIIEEE!
KLIK

WELCOME TO YOUR HAYWARD WAL-MART!
AREN'T YOU AN INTERESTING BUNCH!?
FIND THE TIME FOLDER AND ACTIVATE HER.
THEN WE CATCH A RIDE IN HER WAKE BACK TO--
HEY LOOK, STRYKER!
MITTENS FOR SALE! BUY 2 GET 2 FREE!
SIGH.
HOLD ON! I'M REMEMBERING THIS PART...
THAT'S HER!
OKAY, DOES SHE KNOW I'M FAMOUS?
IS SHE A FAN?
WHAT'S MY ANGLE?
YOU COULD TRY BEING NICE TO HER?
IT CAN'T BE THIS EASY, RIGHT?
I DOUBT IT.
THE OTHER UNIVERSE HAS FORMIDABLE CHAMPIONS OF ITS OWN.
OH NO! DID ONE OF 'EM HAVE FOUR LEGS?
Self Checkout
3
I CAN HELP WHO'S NEXT.
UH...
DAMN GIRL, ARE YOUR JEANS A TIME MACHINE?
BECAUSE...
I CAN SEE THAT ASS IN MY FUTURE.


3
...
DUDE. BRUTAL!
IF YOU SAID THAT TO ME, I'D HAVE BROKEN YOU IN TWO.
THIS ASSHOLE...
I CAN'T--
HEY, COLONEL?
DUNCAN, YOU HOLDING DOWN THE TRANSPORT?
I THINK WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
Walmart
AND HE'S DRESSED LIKE THE OSCAR MEYER WEENIE-MOBILE.
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT!?
I HAD OLD MAN JACK IN MY HEAD TELLING ME I WAS A PIECE OF CRAP, AND I DUNNO...
I JUST...
SHIT.
TIME'S UP...

KRACHOOOM!
Enter
HNH.
I'M IMMUNE TO FIRE. BUT THE LITTLE GUY...
$29.99
BOOF!!
NO!
MISTER, YOU JUST PISSED OFF THE DEADLIEST GIRL ALIVE.
WHO THE HELL?!
THE FLAME. ZEN PYROKINETIC FROM THE OTHER UNIVERSE.
I WAS MERGED WITH HIM. WE WERE SOME KIND OF AMALGAM THING.
HE'S POWERFUL, FOCUSED AND UNRELENTING.
"AND HE'S AFTER THE GIRL."


YOU'RE DONE, BRO!
I'VE FOUGHT EVERY KIND OF NINJA THERE IS!
I AM NO NINJA.
THOK
WOOF!
FUCK YOU, LITTLE MAN.
OF COURSE.
PROFANE MERCENARIES AND RAGAMUFFIN CHILD SOLDIERS IN PLACE OF REAL SUPER-HEROES.
BKOW
BKOW
BKOW
THIS UNIVERSE IS A PERVERTED NIGHTMARE.
KROK!
YEAH, BUT IT'S OUR PERVERTED NIGHTMARE.
KRAKOOOOM

Walmart
KRSH
BLACK TERROR.
PYROMAN. LIBERATOR.
THOSE ARE SUPER-HEROES.
PRINCIPLED. HONEST. INCORRUPT-IBLE.
AND I WON'T LET THEM BE REPLACED.
TOK
GHK
JACK.
HNF.
YOU CAN DO THIS...
TOGETHER...
...YOU'RE FAMILY.

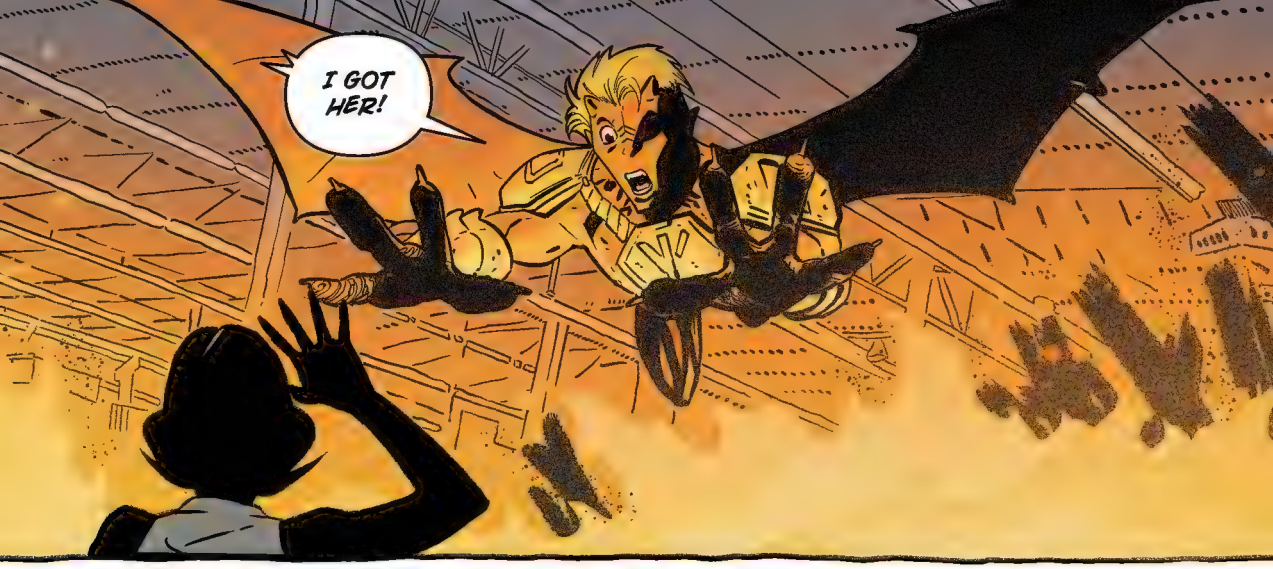
YOU...
YOU'RE UNIQUE.
I'LL MAKE SURE THEY CAN NEVER FOLLOW.
WHAT...
WHAT IS HAPPENING?!
IS THIS...
DID MY MOTHER SEND YOU??
DON'T LET THESE SELFISH PEOPLE USE YOU.
ESCAPE. GO FAR FROM HERE.
KRSH!
GHK!
DO WE STILL DO WITTY FIGHT REPARTEE?
I MEAN, WHEN WE'RE OLD?
IF WE DO, THAT WASN'T IT.
YOU.

AFTER THE UNIVERSES WERE PULLED APART, FANTOMAH ASKED US...
PWAK
...THE HEROES OF MY WORLD, WHAT WE SHOULD DO.
I TOLD HER ABOUT THE LIFETIME I HAD LIVED MERGED WITH YOU, AS GARY XAVER, CROSSFIRE.
I EXPLAINED I KNEW YOU BETTER THAN ANYONE TO EVER LIVE.
THOK
I TOLD HER ABOUT YOUR GREED AND SELFISHNESS, YOUR APPETITE FOR SEXUAL IMPROPRIETY. YOUR INABILITY TO CHANGE.
HOW YOU WERE WHAT PASSED FOR A GREAT HERO IN THIS UNIVERSE.
AND SHE AGREED THAT A PLACE LIKE THIS WAS FAR TOO DANGEROUS TO EXIST SO CLOSE TO OURS.
TSSS
THE ONLY SOLUTION WAS TO OVERTAKE THIS WORLD.
WIPE IT CLEAN.
START IT AGAIN FROM SCRATCH.
GAH!
MAKE IT JUST AND GOOD.

COME ON.
I THINK WE ACTUALLY GOT THIS.
YEAH...
$4.37
WHAM!
I'M SORRY. I JUST...
I CAN'T!
I CAN'T FUCKING CHANGE. HE'S RIGHT!
NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, MAN...
I KNOW I'M GOING TO GROW OLD AND TURN INTO YOU.
NO! DON'T--
I'M GOING TO FAIL AT LIFE AND END UP RIGHT BACK IN THE SAME BULLSHIT TOWN I COULDN'T WAIT TO GET OUT OF WITH ALL THE SAME BULLSHIT PEOPLE AND...
YOU LIVE MY WORST NIGHTMARE, JACK. THE ABSOLUTE WORST.
WE BOTH KNOW WE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE BY LETTING THEM FIX THIS PLACE.
JUST DO WHATEVER YOU CAME HERE TO DO, FLAME.
JUST HIT RESTART.
RRRAAAAAAA!!!

SMASH!
GHK!
YOU DUMB...
SELFISH...
...MOTHER-FUCKER!
YOU'D LET THIS WHOLE WORLD GET RESET. WIPED OUT.
ALL THESE PEOPLE! GONE!
MOM, DAD, ERICA...
EVERYONE!
RATHER THAN JUST--
DOING THE WORK TO NOT END UP AN ASSHOLE.
I FUCKING HATE YOU, MAN.
I'VE NEVER HATED ANYTHING ON EARTH MORE THAN I HATE YOU.
YOU'RE WORSE THAN BILLY KINCAID.
WORSE THAN FUCKING MR. GONE.
WORSE THAN THE FACELESS HORDE.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M EVEN TRYING TO MAKE ANYTHING BETTER OF MYSELF.
BECAUSE YOU'RE ME AND I KNOW...
I FUCKING KNOW YOU CAN'T BE BETTER!
YOU'RE STUPID. AND...
...AND YOU'RE SHALLOW AND SELFISH!
GHH--
STOP--
I JUST WISH YOU WERE FUCKING DEAD.

THE CROSS-JACKS ARE UH...
HAVING SOME SORT OF...
IDENTITY CRISIS?
SOMEBODY NEEDS TO STOP THE FLAME! IF HE GETS TO THE GIRL--
I'M ON IT.
YOU'RE DONE, FLAME.
END OF THE FUCKING LINE.
OH..
OH NO, THE BIG FOUL-MOUTHED MAN IS ANGRY WITH ME.
I'M SO SCARED. HE'S GOT FOUR ARMS!
YEAH...
SKRRRR-CLCH
GAHHH!!
AHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
...NOW I GOT FIVE.
WHACK!
AHHHH!!!
WHACK!
THWACK!
THUD!
WHACK!
NOOO!!!
AHHHHHH!!
HE'S FLAMING OUT!
THE GIRL!
SOME-BODY--!!
FWOOSH!

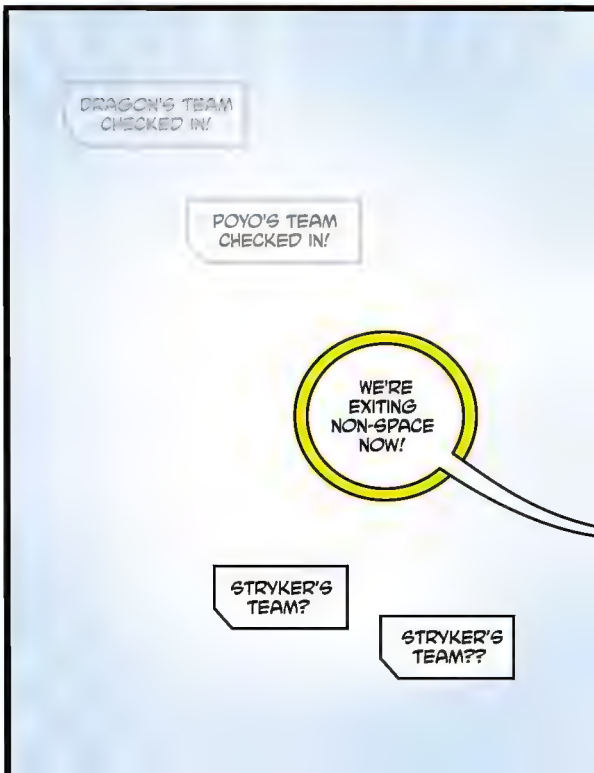

I GOT HER!

IT'S OK.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE OK, MISS...
JOAN...
JOAN PETERSON.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE OK, JOAN PETERSON.
MY NAME'S DUNCAN. YOU'RE SAFE WITH ME.

OH...

OH SHIT.


DRAGON'S TEAM CHECKED IN!
POYO'S TEAM CHECKED IN!
WE'RE EXITING NON-SPACE NOW!
STRYKER'S TEAM?
STRYKER'S TEAM??

STRYKER'S TEAM CHECKING IN, YOUR *SUPREME* HOLINESS.

ALL TEAMS CHECKED IN! GLAD YOU ALL MADE IT BACK IN ONE PIECE.

THE WAR TO SAVE OUR UNIVERSE BEGINS NOW!

UNITE

AND CONQUER!!

BOOF!

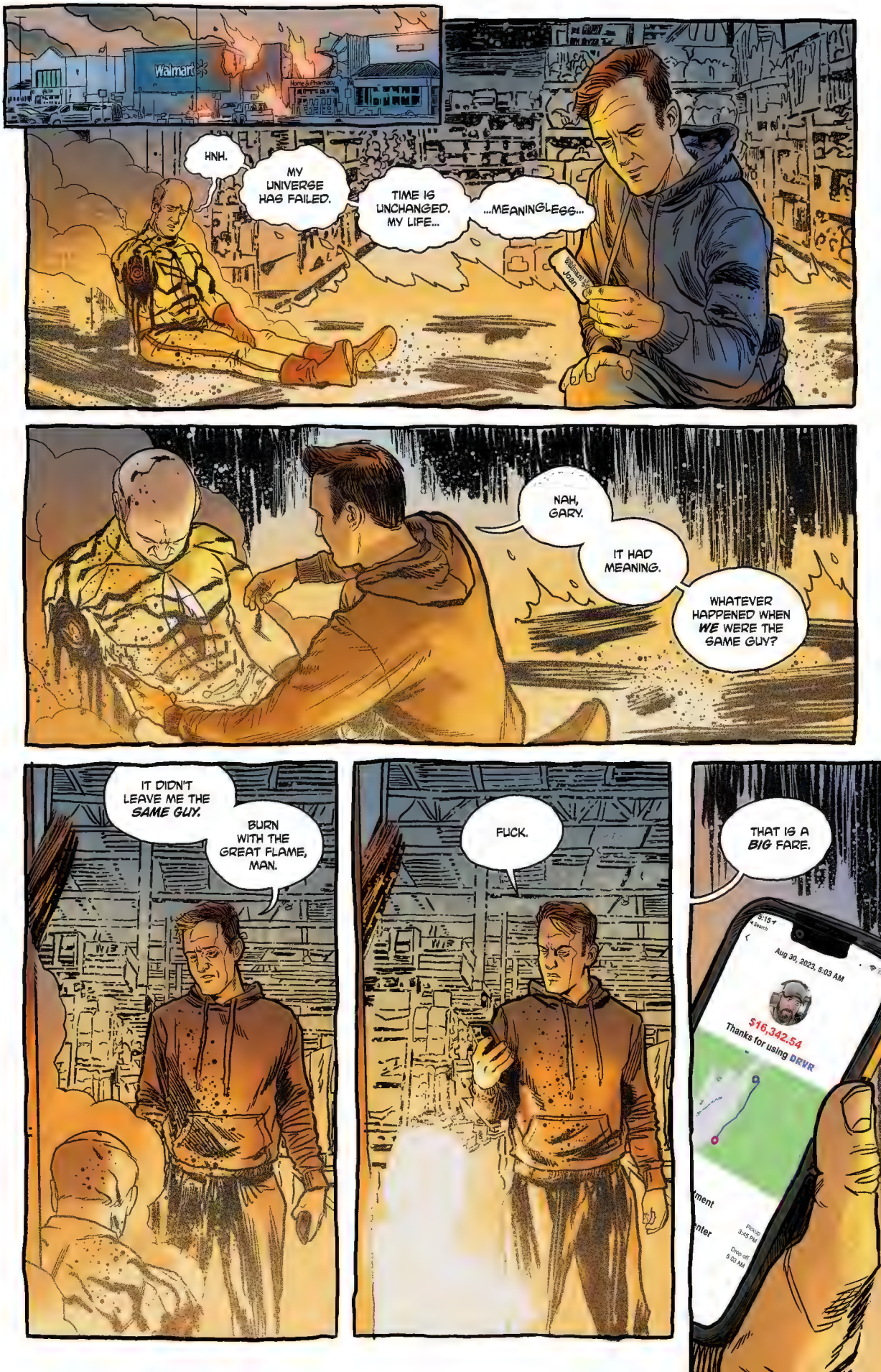
YOU'RE OKAY?!

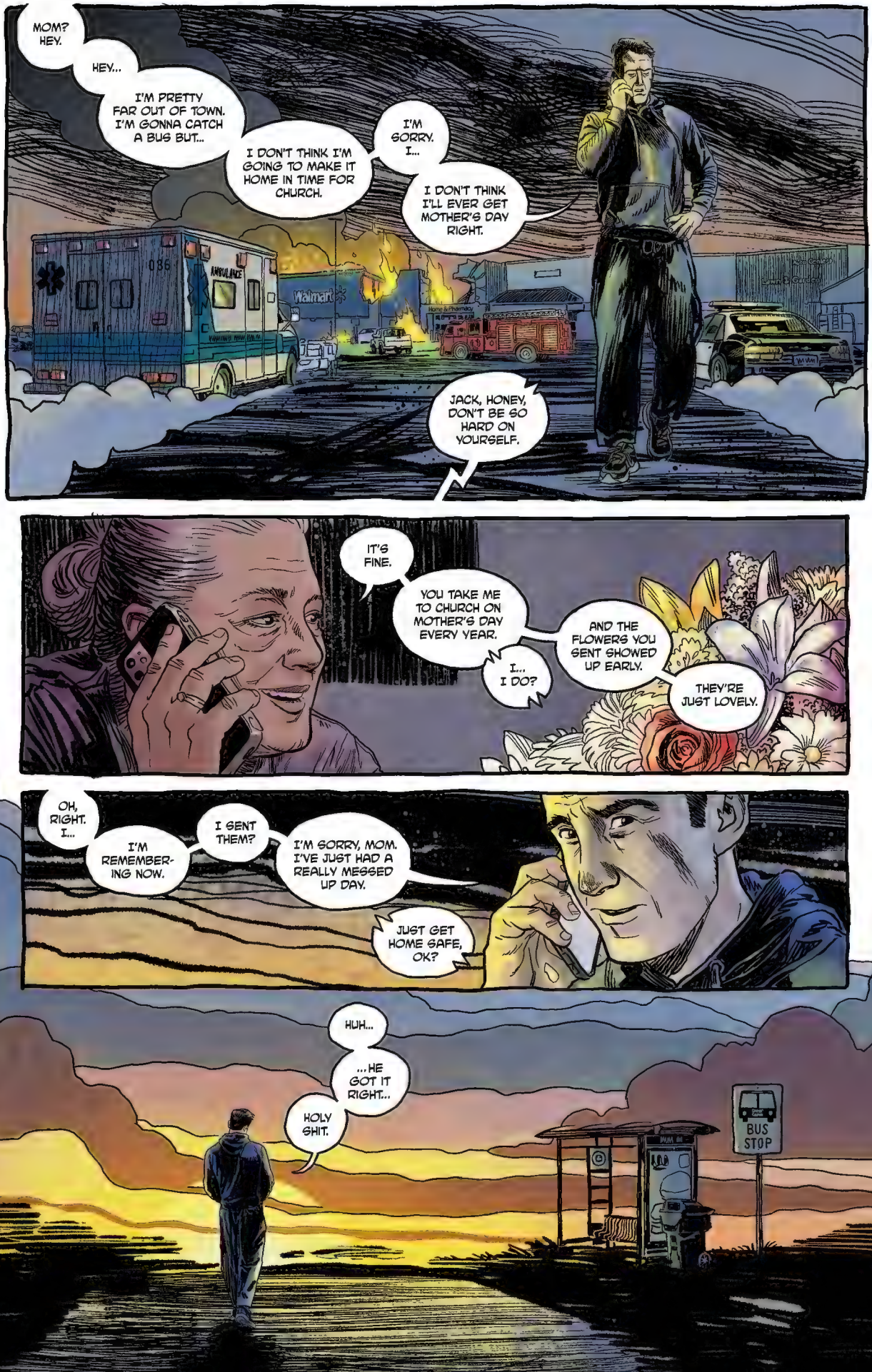
I'M AN ALIEN FROM THE PLANET SMASHMOUTH!

YOUR STUPID EARTH FIRE CAN'T STOP ME FROM...

STREET ANGEL GANG

SKILLIN'! THRILLIN'!
AND KILLIN'!!
SPLCH
THIS MONSTROUS OUTRAGE MUST BE STOPPED!
THEY WILL PAY A DREADFUL PENALTY FOR THEIR IMMORAL ESSENCE!
MAKE THEM LOSE ALL THEIR TAINTED CHATTELS!
THAT'S THE THING, FANTOMAH...
SOME OF US HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE.


Walmart
Home & Pharmacy
HNH.
MY UNIVERSE HAS FAILED.
TIME IS UNCHANGED. MY LIFE...
...MEANINGLESS...
Walmart Joan
NAH, GARY.
IT HAD MEANING.
WHATEVER HAPPENED WHEN WE WERE THE SAME GUY?
IT DIDN'T LEAVE ME THE SAME GUY.
BURN WITH THE GREAT FLAME, MAN.
FUCK.
THAT IS A BIG FARE.
Aug 30, 2023, 5:03 AM
$16,342.54
Thanks for using DRVR


MOM? HEY.
HEY...
I'M PRETTY FAR OUT OF TOWN. I'M GONNA CATCH A BUS BUT...
I DON'T THINK I'M GOING TO MAKE IT HOME IN TIME FOR CHURCH.
I'M SORRY. I...
I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET MOTHER'S DAY RIGHT.
JACK, HONEY, DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF.
IT'S FINE.
YOU TAKE ME TO CHURCH ON MOTHER'S DAY EVERY YEAR.
I... I DO?
AND THE FLOWERS YOU SENT SHOWED UP EARLY.
THEY'RE JUST LOVELY.
OH, RIGHT. I...
I'M REMEMBER-ING NOW.
I SENT THEM?
I'M SORRY, MOM. I'VE JUST HAD A REALLY MESSED UP DAY.
JUST GET HOME SAFE, OK?
HUH...
...HE GOT IT RIGHT...
HOLY SHIT.
BUS STOP

LOCAL MAN
is trademark and copyright
Tim Seeley & Tony Fleecs

STRYKER
is trademark and copyright
Top Cow Productions

BOOF!
is trademark and copyright
Todd McFarlane

FIREBREATHER
is trademark and copyright
Phil Hester & Andy Kuhn

STREET ANGEL
is trademark and copyright
Jim Rugg & Brian Maruca

DYNAMO FIVE
is trademark and copyright
Jay Faerber & Mahmud A. Asrar

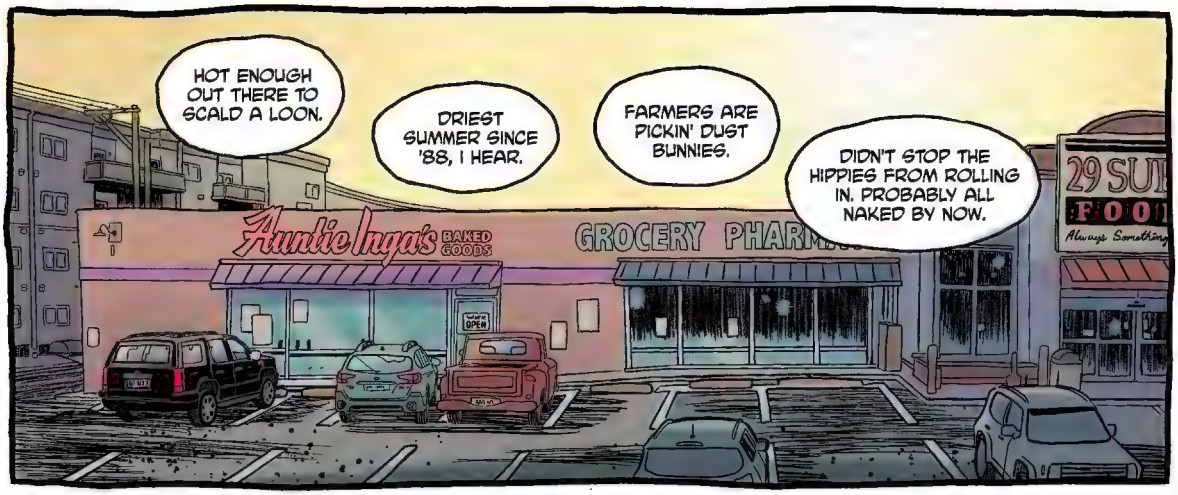
LOVE EVERLASTING
is trademark and copyright
Tom King & Elsa Charretier

THE FLAME
created by
Will Eisner & Lou Fine

BATTLE POPE
is trademark and copyright
Robert Kirkman & Tony Moore

All other Image Comics heroes are trademark and copyright their respective owners.

Chapter 6


HOT ENOUGH OUT THERE TO SCALD A LOON.
DRIEST SUMMER SINCE '88, I HEAR.
FARMERS ARE PICKIN' DUST BUNNIES.
DIDN'T STOP THE HIPPIES FROM ROLLING IN. PROBABLY ALL NAKED BY NOW.
Auntie Inga's BAKED GOODS
GROCERY PHARM
29 SU
FOO
Always Something

YA FIGURE OUR "SUPERHERO" IS GONNA SAVE US FROM THE SUN?

I MEAN, HE WENT HOME TO LIVE IN HIS PARENTS' BASEMENT SO...

HOW COME WE CAN'T CALL HIM CROSSJACK?
THIRD GEN OWNS HIS COSTUME. IT'S CALLED COPYRIGHT LAW, HONEY.
I OWN A COSTUME!

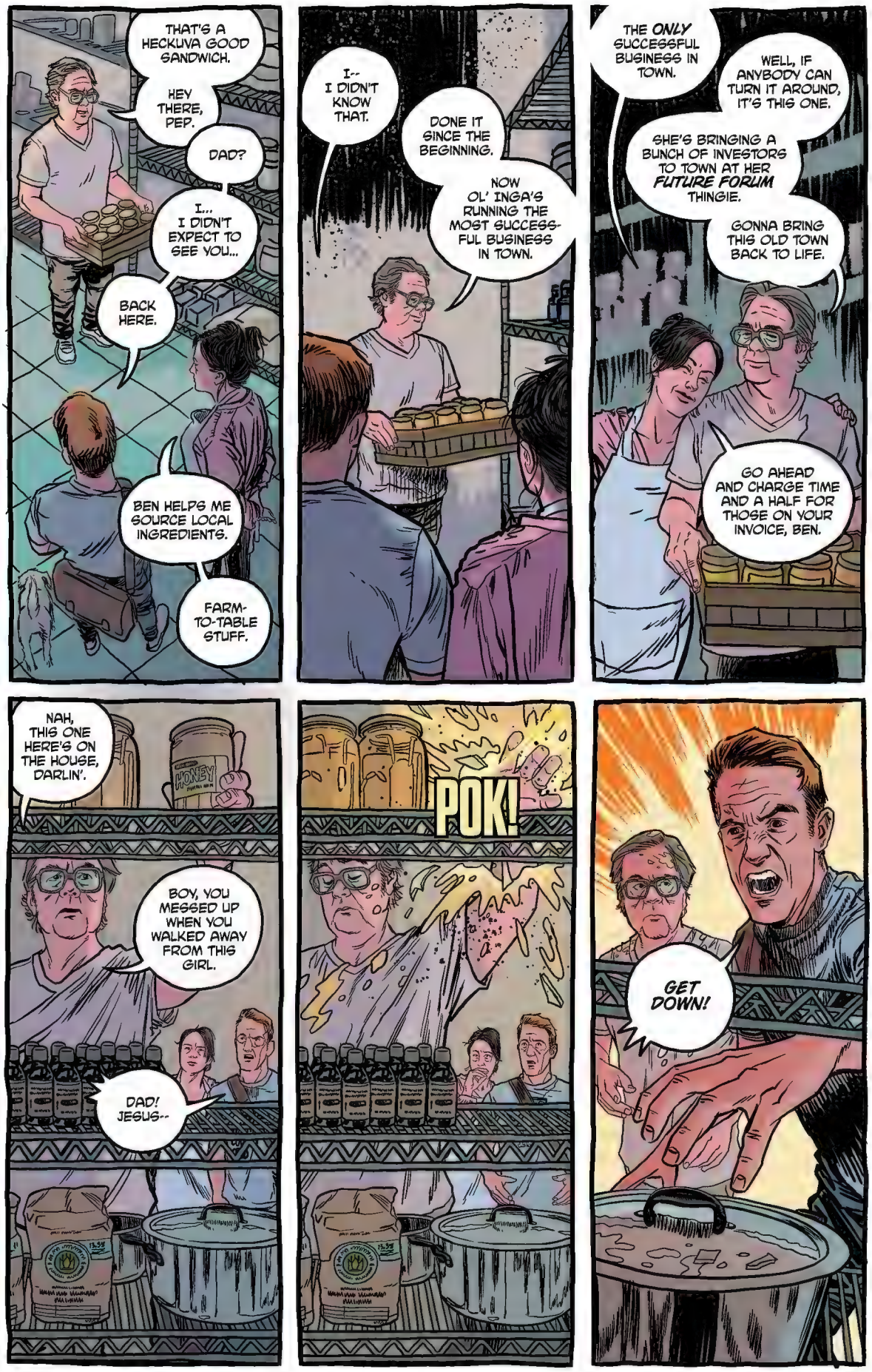
FUCK CROSSJACK.

WE WAS BETTER OFF WITHOUT THAT ASSHOLE AROUND.

FUCK CROSS-JACK.

THE DRY SEASON

MR. XAVER AND MR. PEPPER.
WHAT CAN I GET STARTED FOR THE TWO OF YOU?
CHOCO-CROISSANT OR A MORNING QUICKIE?
I'M GOOD, ACTUALLY. IS INGA HERE?
"MRS. BUCHOLZ IS BACK IN THE STOCKROOM."
HNF!
YOUR CASHIER OFFERED ME A MORNING QUICKIE.
BUT I ONLY WANTED ONE FROM YOU.
MM.
JACK. DON'T...
DON'T STOP.
MORNING QUICKIE?


THAT'S A HECKUVA GOOD SANDWICH.
HEY THERE, PEP.
DAD?
I... I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU...
BACK HERE.
BEN HELPS ME SOURCE LOCAL INGREDIENTS.
FARM-TO-TABLE STUFF.
I-- I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
DONE IT SINCE THE BEGINNING.
NOW OL' INGA'S RUNNING THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IN TOWN.
THE ONLY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS IN TOWN.
WELL, IF ANYBODY CAN TURN IT AROUND, IT'S THIS ONE.
SHE'S BRINGING A BUNCH OF INVESTORS TO TOWN AT HER FUTURE FORUM THINGIE.
GONNA BRING THIS OLD TOWN BACK TO LIFE.
GO AHEAD AND CHARGE TIME AND A HALF FOR THOSE ON YOUR INVOICE, BEN.
NAH, THIS ONE HERE'S ON THE HOUSE, DARLIN'.
HONEY
BOY, YOU MESSED UP WHEN YOU WALKED AWAY FROM THIS GIRL.
DAD! JESUS--
POK!
GET DOWN!

TAKE IT EASY, PATRIOTS.
THOSE WERE JUST WARNING SHOTS.
I'M NOT HERE TO HURT ANYONE, BUT I WILL IF I HAVE TO!
AND I'LL HAVE TO IF I DON'T GET ANSWERS!
NOW, LISTEN! THE CAMO CRUSADER WAS THE GREATEST SUPERHERO THERE EVER WAS!
#TRUTH
HE WAS THE CHAMPION OF JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF, AND THE DESTROYER OF SIN!
BUT HE DIED!
THE FAKE MEDIA SAYS HE GOT KILLED IN ACTION AGAINST ALIENS ON PLANET KAOS!
THAT'S WHAT YOU SHEEP BELIEVE! BUT IT'S A LIE!
HE GOT KILLED ON EARTH!
FLIGHT TRACKERS SAY HE WAS IN FARMINGTON!
THAT IS THE #TRUTH!

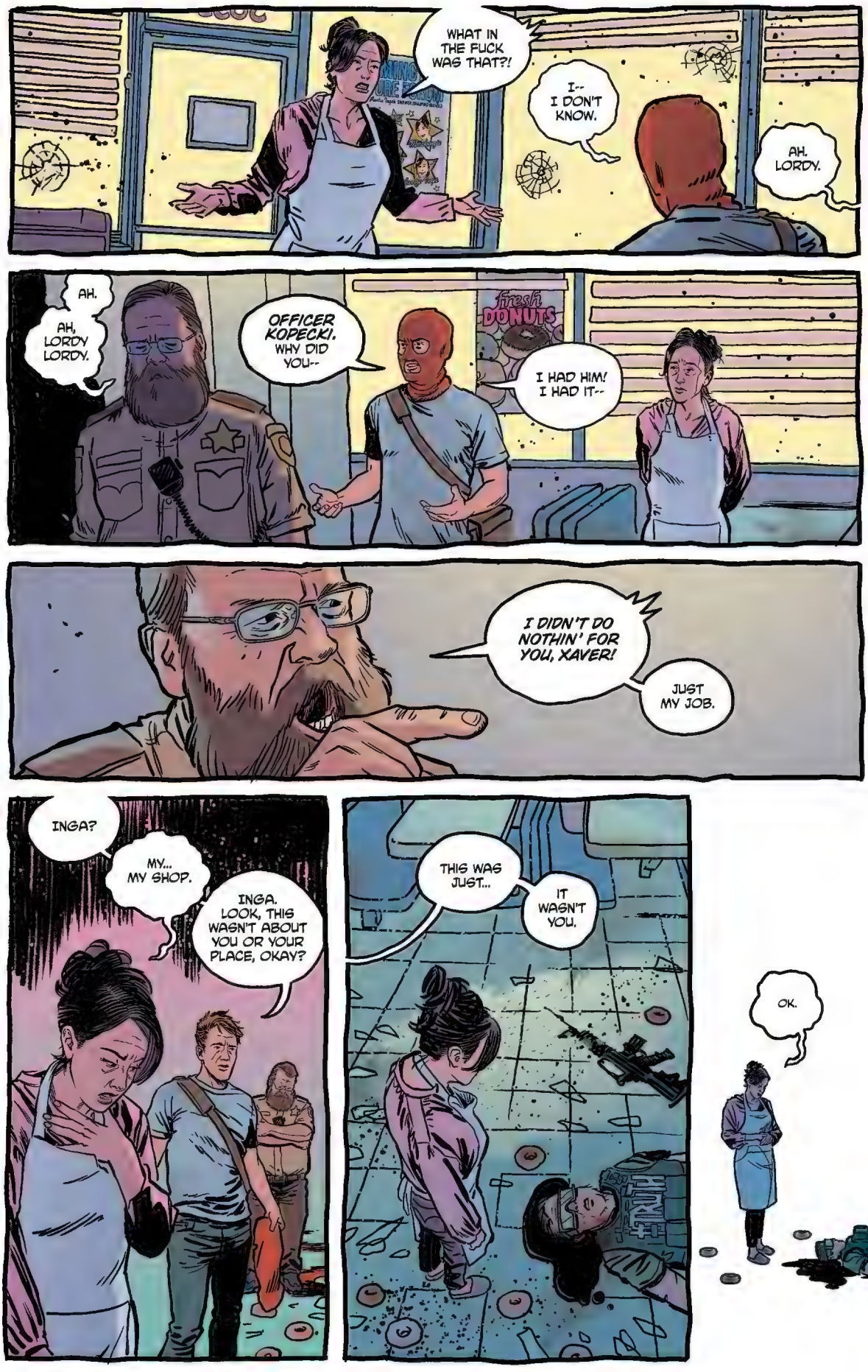
HE WAS TARGETED BY THE SATANIC FORCES OF THE DEEP STATE TO ROB REAL AMERICANS OF THEIR SAVIOR!
AND HIS ASSASSIN WASN'T NO STRANGER!
#TRUTH
YOU THOUGHT HE WAS KICKED OUT OF THIRD GEN FOR SEXUAL IMPROPRIETOUSNESS!
BUT THE #TRUTH IS HE WAS SENT HERE TO LIE IN WAIT LIKE A COILED COBRA!
Local Man Saves Priest
Onlooker Snaps camera at perfect moment
WHERE IS THE SLAYER OF THE EVANGELIC AVENGER?!
WHERE IS THE JUDAS YOU CALL LOCAL MAN?!

YOU FUCKERS.
PTANG
PTANG
PTANG
PTANG
BRAAAAP
FHH!
Y--YOU THINK YOU KNOW SO MUCH.
ALL THAT INSIDE INFORMATION. SO I GUESS YOU KNOW...
I NEVER MISS.
#TRUTH
NOT EVEN WITH THE RICOCHETS.
YOUR GUN IS FUCKED.

GOT ANY OTHER IDEAS?
...
AHHHH!
YOU'RE NUTS, MAN!
KLANG
COME ON! LET'S GO!
EVERYONE OUT!
JEEZ, BOY...
5653
"WHAT'D YOU BRING TO OUR TOWN NOW?"
YOU THINK WE DON'T KNOW!?
THIS SHIT DOESN'T END WITH CAMO CRUSADER, EITHER!
GH!
THIS GOES ALL THE WAY TO THE TOP!

BUT IT'S ALL SOME BIG GAME TO YOU, YOU FUCKIN' NPC!
JUST PLAYIN' YOUR PART, THROWIN' AWAY YOUR YELLOW TIGHTS, PRETENDING TO BE NORMAL PEOPLE.
BUT YOU AREN'T! YOU'RE A GODDAMN MANHATTAN CANDIDATE!
THE CRUSADER WASN'T JUST SOME THIRD GEN CELEBRI-HERO!
HE DIDN'T CARE ABOUT FAME OR MONEY! HE WAS GOING TO SAVE US!
REALLY SAVE US!
HNH!
AND YOU TOOK HIS EYE WITH A BOLT OF STEEL!
WHAT?
#TRUTH
WE KNOW.
THE TRUTH IS GONNA COME OUT, AND THEN THE OLD ORDER IS GONNA FALL, NO MATTER IF YOU KILL ME OR NOT.
I'M NOT...
I'M NOT GOING TO KILL YOU.
I JUST-- I NEED TO...
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
HA.
THE TRUTH. THE #TRUTH IS...

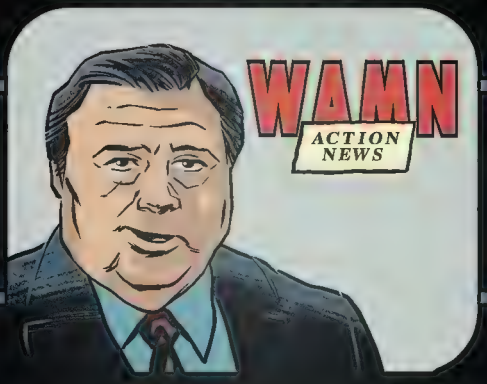
PKOW
HUFF.
HUFF. STAND...
STAND DOWN.
AH, CHRIST.
WE--
WE KNOW WHAT YOU DID.
RRF!
BECAUSE WHEN YOU TOOK HIS EYE...
IT WENT UP TO HEAVEN TO LOOK DOWN...
AND NOW ALL WHO WISHED THEY COULD...
...SEE THE WORLD AS HE DID...
THEY SEE...


WHAT IN THE FUCK WAS THAT?!
I-- I DON'T KNOW.
AH. LORDY.
AH.
AH, LORDY LORDY.
OFFICER KOPECKI. WHY DID YOU--
fresh DONUTS
I HAD HIM! I HAD IT--
I DIDN'T DO NOTHIN' FOR YOU, XAVER!
JUST MY JOB.
INGA?
MY... MY SHOP.
INGA. LOOK, THIS WASN'T ABOUT YOU OR YOUR PLACE, OKAY?
THIS WAS JUST...
IT WASN'T YOU.
OK.

MORE VIOLENCE IN SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN TODAY, ON THE HEELS OF THE MURDERS EARLIER THIS MONTH OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE SUPERHUMAN MERCENARY UNIT, THE ***DESOLATORS***. ***THIRD GEN'S*** INTERIM SPOKESMAN ***NEON*** HAD THIS TO SAY....

GIVE ME A !BLEEP!...! BREAK! YOU WANNA SHOOT UP A SMALL BUSINESS, I GOT PLENTY OF WOKE-PEDDLERS THAT FIT THE BILL!

THE ONLY THING THIS LITTLE WISCONSIN TOWN DOES IS TAKE OUT THE TRASH!

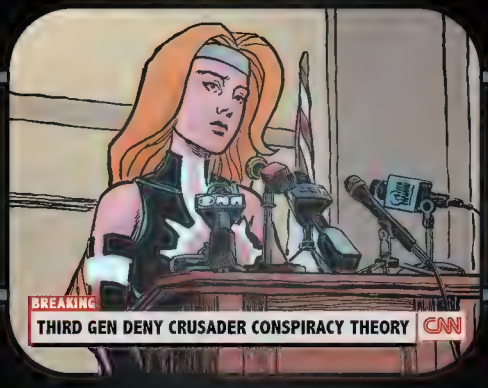


...COINCIDING WITH NEWS OUT OF FARMINGTON, A24 ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WOULD PROCEED WITH THEIR ADAPTATION OF THE MEMOIR, ***THE DARK INSIDE***, BY ***STACY WOHL***.

PRODUCERS WILL ADD NEW SCENES TO THE SCRIPT FOLLOWING WOHL UP TO HER LAST DAYS.

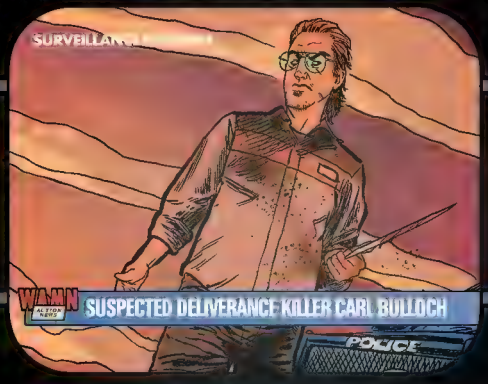
"I MISS CAMO CRUSADER. WE ALL DO. BUT, THESE CONSPIRACY THEORIES DO NOTHING TO HONOR MY HUSBAND'S MEMORY. NOTHING.

REMEMBER HIM WITH GOOD DEEDS. BE A FRIEND. PLANT A TREE. GOD BLESS."



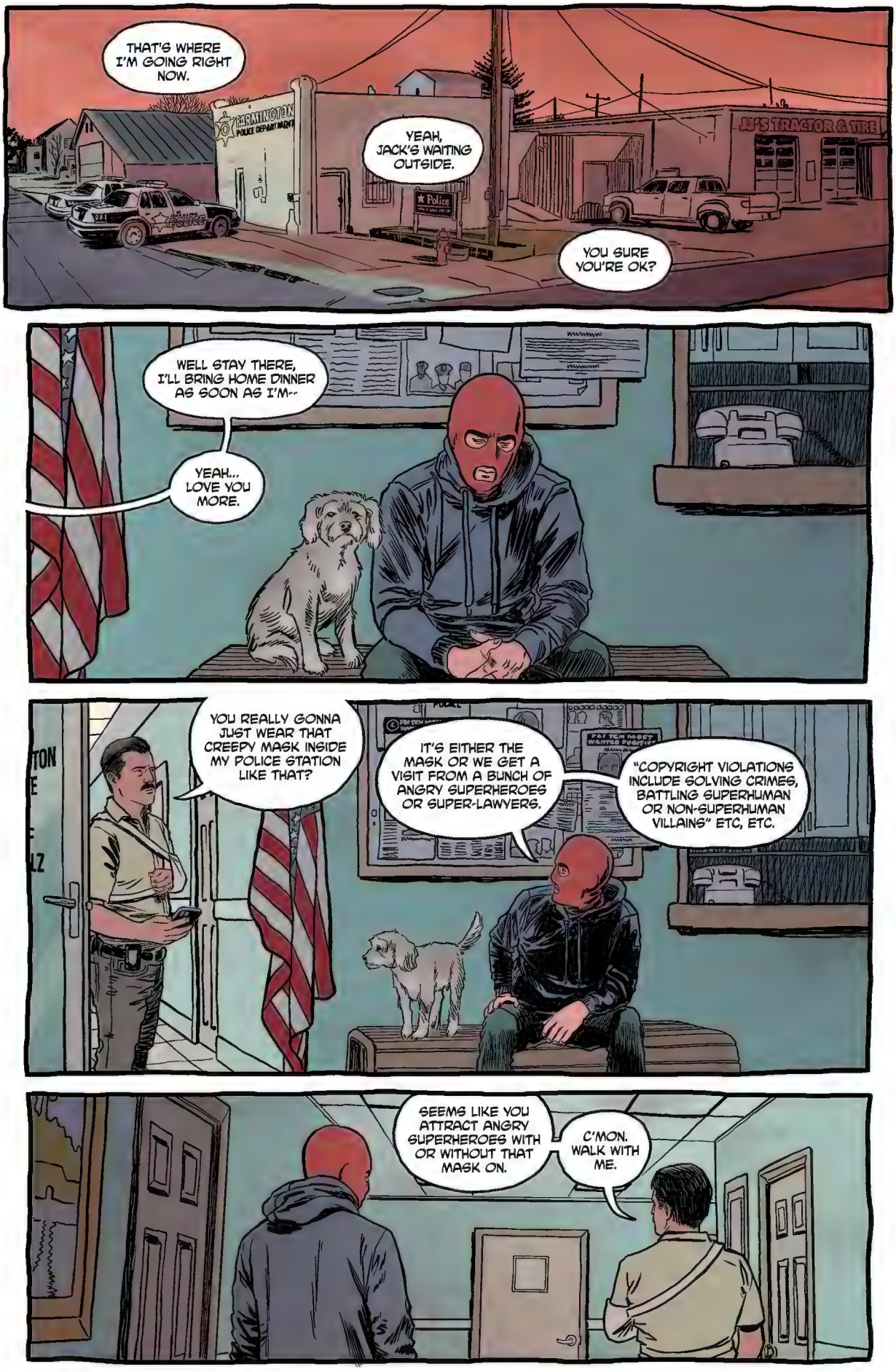
SERIOUSLY, WITHIN A FEW DAYS THIS SPRING, THEY'D PUT FREAKS LIKE THE ***HODAG*** AND ***FRIGHTSIDE*** IN THE DIRT!

YOU CAN GIVE THE CREDIT TO THIS "***DELIVERANCE***" KILLER ALL YOU WANT. BUT THIS PLACE, FARMINGTON, HAS GOT THE RIGHT IDEA ABOUT JUSTICE! I SAY LEAVE 'EM TO IT!



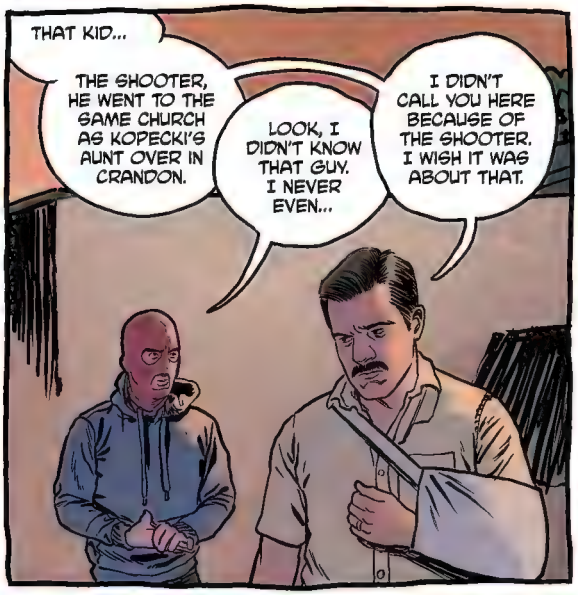
WOHL, AKA FRIGHTSIDE, WAS MURDERED BY 'SUPERVILLAIN-OBSESSED' FAN, ***CARL BULLOCH***. THE FILM IS TARGETED FOR AN OCTOBER RELEASE WITH THE NEW TITLE "***SPECIAL DELIVERY***."

CAMERAS ARE SET TO ROLL IN ***VANCOUVER***, EARLY NEXT MONTH.

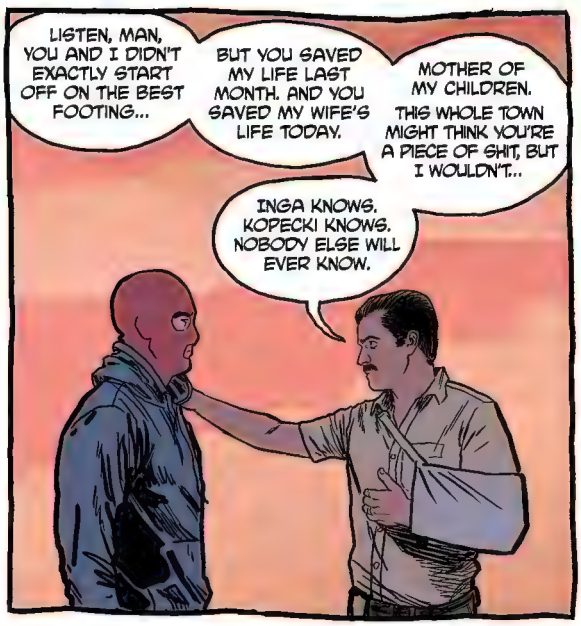

THAT'S WHERE I'M GOING RIGHT NOW.
YEAH, JACK'S WAITING OUTSIDE.
YOU SURE YOU'RE OK?
FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
JJ'S TRACTOR & TIRE
Police
WELL STAY THERE, I'LL BRING HOME DINNER AS SOON AS I'M--
YEAH... LOVE YOU MORE.
YOU REALLY GONNA JUST WEAR THAT CREEPY MASK INSIDE MY POLICE STATION LIKE THAT?
IT'S EITHER THE MASK OR WE GET A VISIT FROM A BUNCH OF ANGRY SUPERHEROES OR SUPER-LAWYERS.
"COPYRIGHT VIOLATIONS INCLUDE SOLVING CRIMES, BATTLING SUPERHUMAN OR NON-SUPERHUMAN VILLAINS" ETC, ETC.
SEEMS LIKE YOU ATTRACT ANGRY SUPERHEROES WITH OR WITHOUT THAT MASK ON.
C'MON. WALK WITH ME.

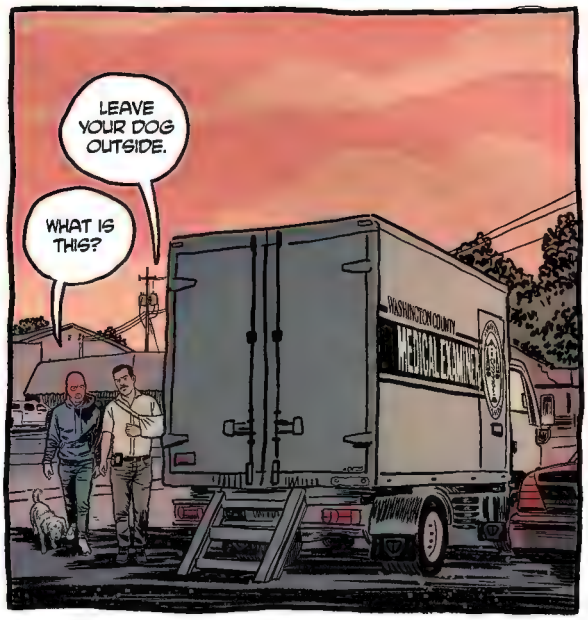
I DON'T THINK THAT KID HAD SUPERPOWERS. HE WAS JUST...
HOW'S OFFICER KOPECKI DOING?
HE SAYS HE'S OK BUT I CAN TELL HE'S PRETTY SHOOK UP.
HE NEVER SHOT ANYBODY BEFORE.
FARMINGTON POLICE STATION

"YEAH... THAT CAN FUCK YOU UP."

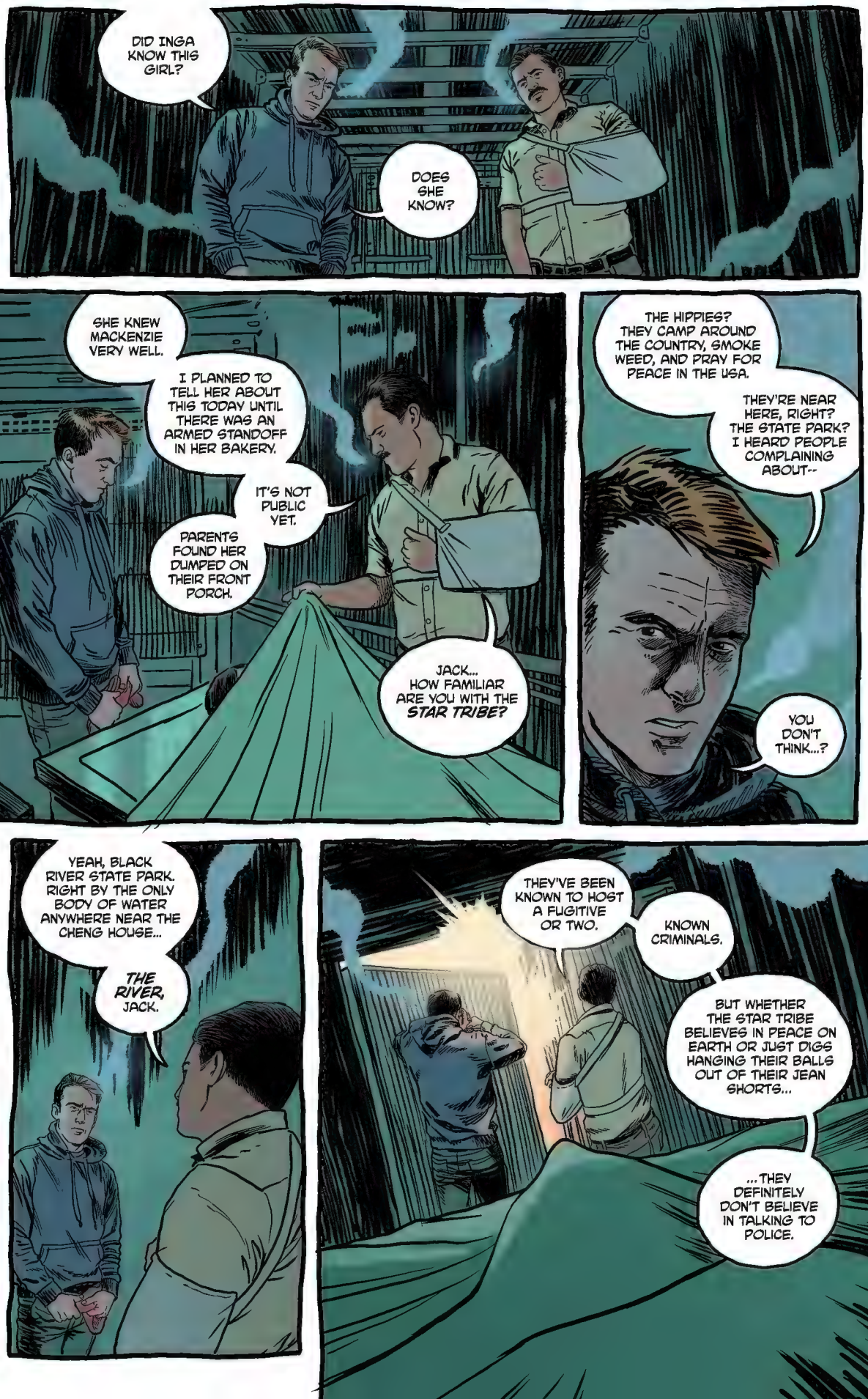

THAT KID...
THE SHOOTER, HE WENT TO THE SAME CHURCH AS KOPECKI'S AUNT OVER IN CRANDON.
LOOK, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT GUY. I NEVER EVEN...
I DIDN'T CALL YOU HERE BECAUSE OF THE SHOOTER. I WISH IT WAS ABOUT THAT.

BRIAN, DID YOU TELL SOMEONE?
ABOUT CAMO CRUSADER? ABOUT WHAT I DID TO...
BECAUSE THE KID, HE WAS SAYING ALL THIS--


LISTEN, MAN, YOU AND I DIDN'T EXACTLY START OFF ON THE BEST FOOTING...
BUT YOU SAVED MY LIFE LAST MONTH. AND YOU SAVED MY WIFE'S LIFE TODAY.
MOTHER OF MY CHILDREN.
THIS WHOLE TOWN MIGHT THINK YOU'RE A PIECE OF SHIT, BUT I WOULDN'T...
INGA KNOWS. KOPECKI KNOWS. NOBODY ELSE WILL EVER KNOW.


LEAVE YOUR DOG OUTSIDE.
WHAT IS THIS?
WASHINGTON COUNTY
MEDICAL EXAMINER

REFRIGERATED TRUCK. COUNTY CHIEF MEDICAL EXAMINER DROVE IT OVER.
SHE'S OVER AT THE BAR NOW HAVING A FEW.
THIS ONE'S PRETTY ROUGH...
AW, C'MON MAN!
CAN I GET A LITTLE MORE WARNING BEFORE YOU SHOW ME A--
SIXTEEN YEARS OLD.
AUTOPSY SAYS SHE DROWNED.
WHERE? AT THE QUARRY?
WATER SAMPLE'S ON THE WAY TO THE LAB NOW.
BUT WE KNOW THAT SHE WAS KNOWN TO BE AN EXCELLENT SWIMMER AND HER BODY WAS FOUND ON DRY LAND...
SO... FOUL PLAY?
IS IT LIKE, FENTANYL OR...
"I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO THINK. THIS IS ALL--"
"HER NAME WAS MACKENZIE CHENG. STAR STUDENT. MEMBER OF THE YOUNG WISCONSIN BUSINESS LEADERS."
"OH NO... INGA'S FUTURE FORUM."
Mackenzie


DID INGA KNOW THIS GIRL?
DOES SHE KNOW?
SHE KNEW MACKENZIE VERY WELL.
I PLANNED TO TELL HER ABOUT THIS TODAY UNTIL THERE WAS AN ARMED STANDOFF IN HER BAKERY.
IT'S NOT PUBLIC YET.
PARENTS FOUND HER DUMPED ON THEIR FRONT PORCH.
JACK... HOW FAMILIAR ARE YOU WITH THE *STAR TRIBE?*
THE HIPPIES? THEY CAMP AROUND THE COUNTRY, SMOKE WEED, AND PRAY FOR PEACE IN THE USA.
THEY'RE NEAR HERE, RIGHT? THE STATE PARK? I HEARD PEOPLE COMPLAINING ABOUT--
YOU DON'T THINK...?
YEAH, BLACK RIVER STATE PARK. RIGHT BY THE ONLY BODY OF WATER ANYWHERE NEAR THE CHENG HOUSE...
THE RIVER, JACK.
THEY'VE BEEN KNOWN TO HOST A FUGITIVE OR TWO.
KNOWN CRIMINALS.
BUT WHETHER THE STAR TRIBE BELIEVES IN PEACE ON EARTH OR JUST DIGS HANGING THEIR BALLS OUT OF THEIR JEAN SHORTS...
...THEY DEFINITELY DON'T BELIEVE IN TALKING TO POLICE.

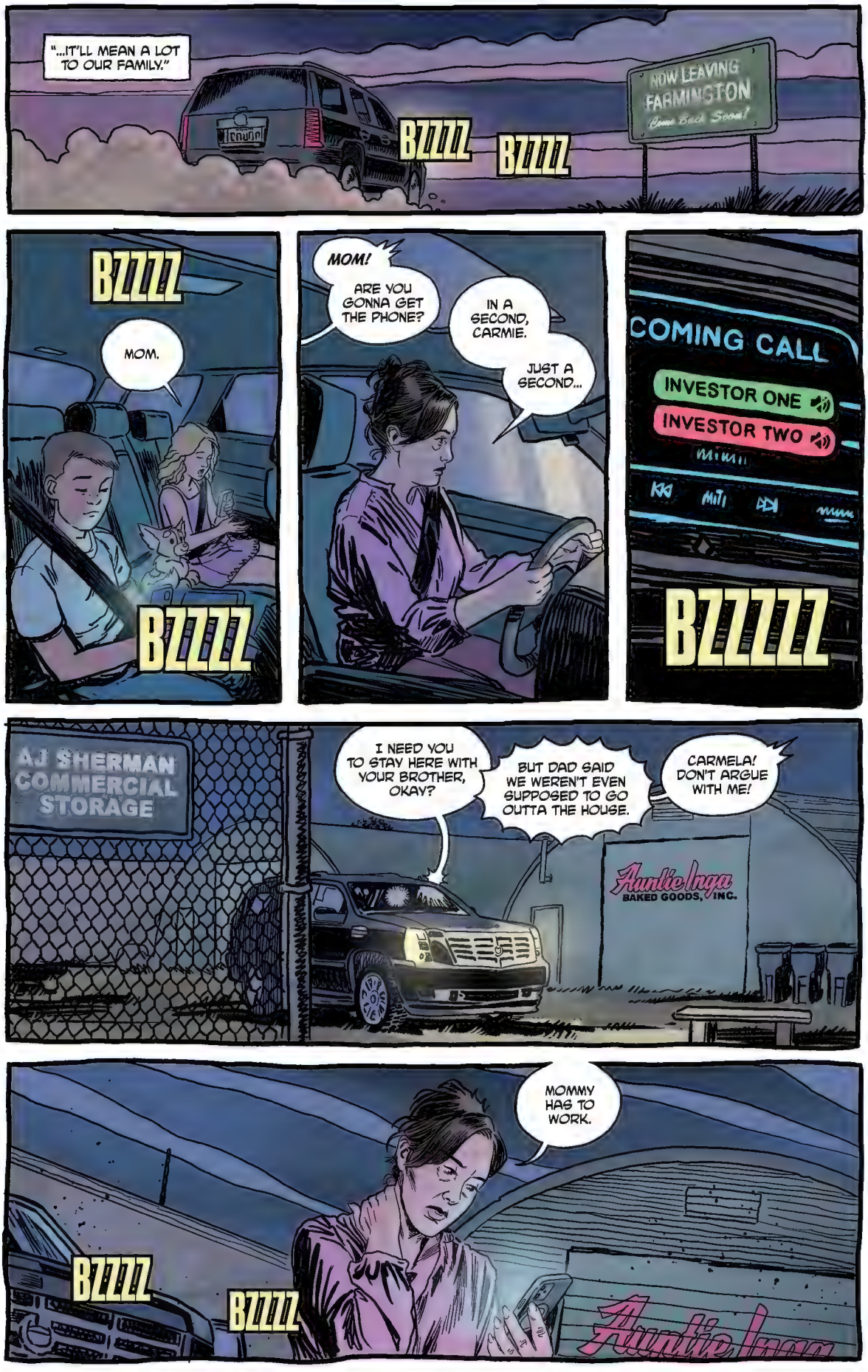
I NEED YOU TO GO TALK TO THEM.
FIND OUT WHAT THEY KNOW.
I... BRIAN, I'M NOT A DETECTIVE.
WASHINGTON COUNTY
MEDICAL EXAMINER
THE HODAG THING...
DELIVERANCE JUST FOUND ME. I DIDN'T...

THIS MAY SHOCK YOU, JACK, BUT I'M NOT A DETECTIVE EITHER.
I'M JUST HERE TO KEEP THE PEOPLE IN THIS TOWN FROM DRINKING TOO MUCH AND HITTING EACH OTHER.
BEFORE YOU SHOWED UP, THERE HADN'T BEEN A MURDER IN FARMINGTON SINCE 1974.
BUT... THIS IS WHERE WE FIND OURSELVES.

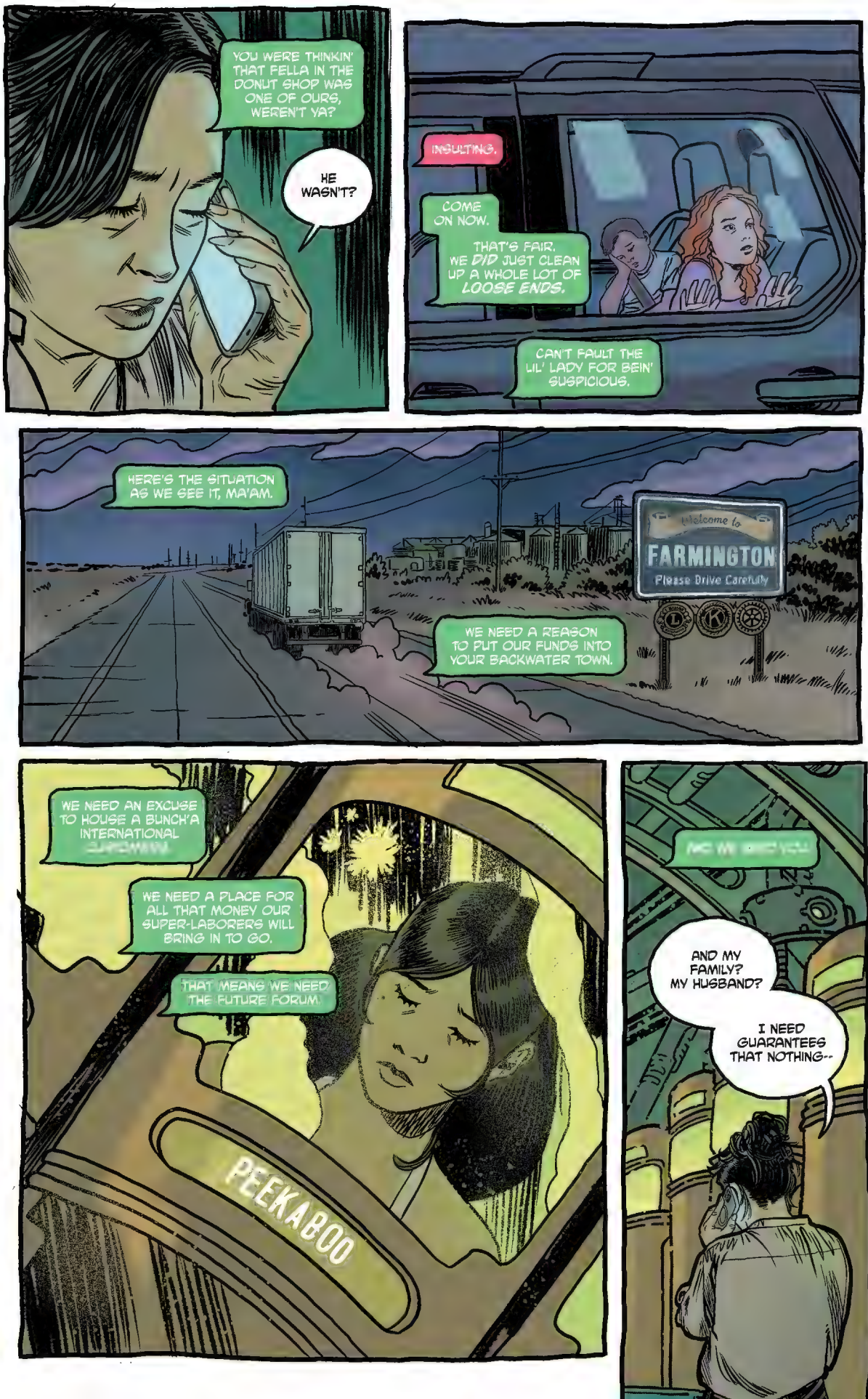
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO SOLVE THIS THING.
IN FACT-- IF YOU GO POKING AROUND IN ANY PART OF THIS BESIDES THESE HIPPIES, I'LL LOCK YOU UP MYSELF.
THE LAST THING THIS GIRL'S FAMILY NEEDS IS YOUR SPECIAL BRAND OF SUPERHERO FIREWORKS WHILE THEY'RE TRYING TO GRIEVE.
THESE FOREST FOLK WON'T TALK TO COPS...

"INGA SAYS YOU'RE TRYING TO GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER."
"...TRYING TO BE A GOOD GUY."

IT'LL MEAN A LOT TO HER WHEN I TELL HER THAT YOU'RE HELPING US OUT WITH THIS...


"...IT'LL MEAN A LOT TO OUR FAMILY."
BZZZZ
BZZZZ
NOW LEAVING FARMINGTON
Come Back Soon!
BZZZZ
MOM.
BZZZZ
MOM!
ARE YOU GONNA GET THE PHONE?
IN A SECOND, CARMIE.
JUST A SECOND...
COMING CALL
INVESTOR ONE
INVESTOR TWO
BZZZZZ
AJ SHERMAN COMMERCIAL STORAGE
I NEED YOU TO STAY HERE WITH YOUR BROTHER, OKAY?
BUT DAD SAID WE WEREN'T EVEN SUPPOSED TO GO OUTTA THE HOUSE.
CARMELA! DON'T ARGUE WITH ME!
Auntie Inga
BAKED GOODS, INC.
MOMMY HAS TO WORK.
BZZZZ
BZZZZ
Auntie Inga

MELTDOWN
THE SLICK
KIND DEE
SOAKAFE
THEY'RE ALL HERE.
THANK FUCKING GOD.
BZZZZ
BEEP
HELLO.
WE DON'T LIKE TO BE IGNORED, MRS. JOHANNING.
I HAD...
THERE WAS AN INCIDENT AT WORK.
WE'RE AWARE.
REAL UNFORTUNATE, THAT. LOTS OF PAIN IN THIS COUNTRY, Y'KNOW.
YOU CAN SEE HOW PEOPLE GET A LITTLE LOST IN THEIR FEAR.
SPEAKING OF FEAR...

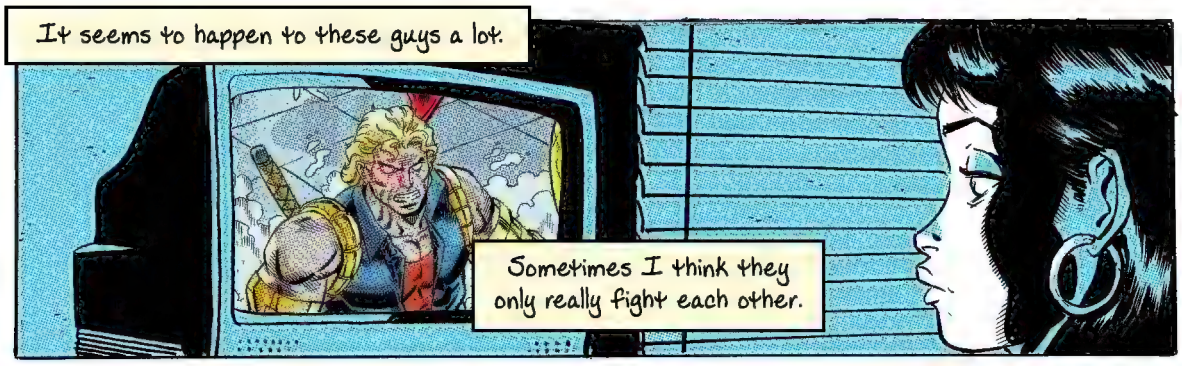

YOU WERE THINKIN' THAT FELLA IN THE DONUT SHOP WAS ONE OF OURS, WEREN'T YA?
HE WASN'T?
INSULTING.
COME ON NOW.
THAT'S FAIR. WE DID JUST CLEAN UP A WHOLE LOT OF LOOSE ENDS.
CAN'T FAULT THE LIL' LADY FOR BEIN' SUSPICIOUS.
HERE'S THE SITUATION AS WE SEE IT, MA'AM.
Welcome to
FARMINGTON
Please Drive Carefully
WE NEED A REASON TO PUT OUR FUNDS INTO YOUR BACKWATER TOWN.
WE NEED AN EXCUSE TO HOUSE A BUNCH'A INTERNATIONAL
WE NEED A PLACE FOR ALL THAT MONEY OUR SUPER-LABORERS WILL BRING IN TO GO.
THAT MEANS WE NEED THE FUTURE FORUM.
PEEKABOO
AND MY FAMILY? MY HUSBAND?
I NEED GUARANTEES THAT NOTHING--

I THINK I SPEAK FOR ALL THE UNDERSIGNED WHEN I SAY WE DON'T WANT TROUBLE TO RUN HIGH AND DEEP.
AW LORDY...
...LORDY.
AS LONG AS THERE AIN'T NO UNEXPECTED PERSONAL DETOURS
NO UNEXPECTED DEMONIC DANGER
NO ROOT INFESTATION OF MODERNISM
behind

Left Behind...

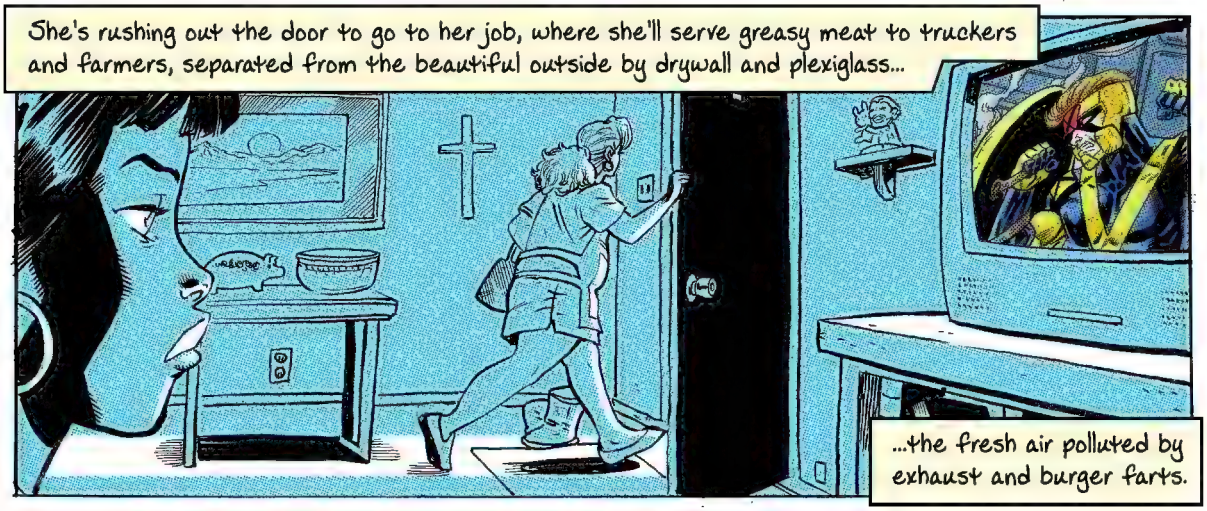
image
6
$3.99
THE TICK
MARAT

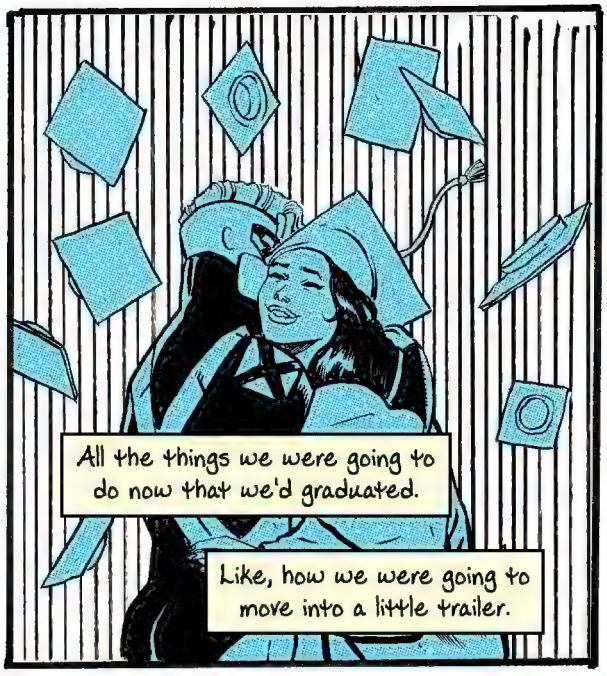
Sci-Spy.
That's who my boyfriend left me for.
The news says he used to be a member of Third Gen, but back when they were Second Gen.
And anyway, he went bad, and that's what they needed Jack... Crossjack for.
To replace the guy who went bad.


It seems to happen to these guys a lot.
Sometimes I think they only really fight each other.

Sometimes, I don't think anyone agrees on how you're supposed to be a good guy.
INGA! GET OFF THE COUCH!

BEST SHACK
CONNIE
GET SOME FRESH AIR! IT'S BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE!
It's kinda funny, my mom saying that.


She's rushing out the door to go to her job, where she'll serve greasy meat to truckers and farmers, separated from the beautiful outside by drywall and plexiglass...
...the fresh air polluted by exhaust and burger farts.



JACK! HODAG IS ATTACKING THE FEEDMILL!
NOT ON OUR WATCH!
And how that little place would double as a secret headquarters for our dynamic duo; me the mastermind, him the muscle.

It was so simple and small. We were going to save Farmington.
From villains and criminals and politicians and racists and dumb hicks who tried to grab my butt when I walked by and and and...

And that wasn't good enough for Jack.

And now, I have so many choices in front of me, and no one to make them with.
I'm drowning in the unknown.

Now I don't know where I should go and what I should do, or if I should get rid of my bangs because they don't wear them like this in Chicago or LA anymore and...

ARRRRRGGH!

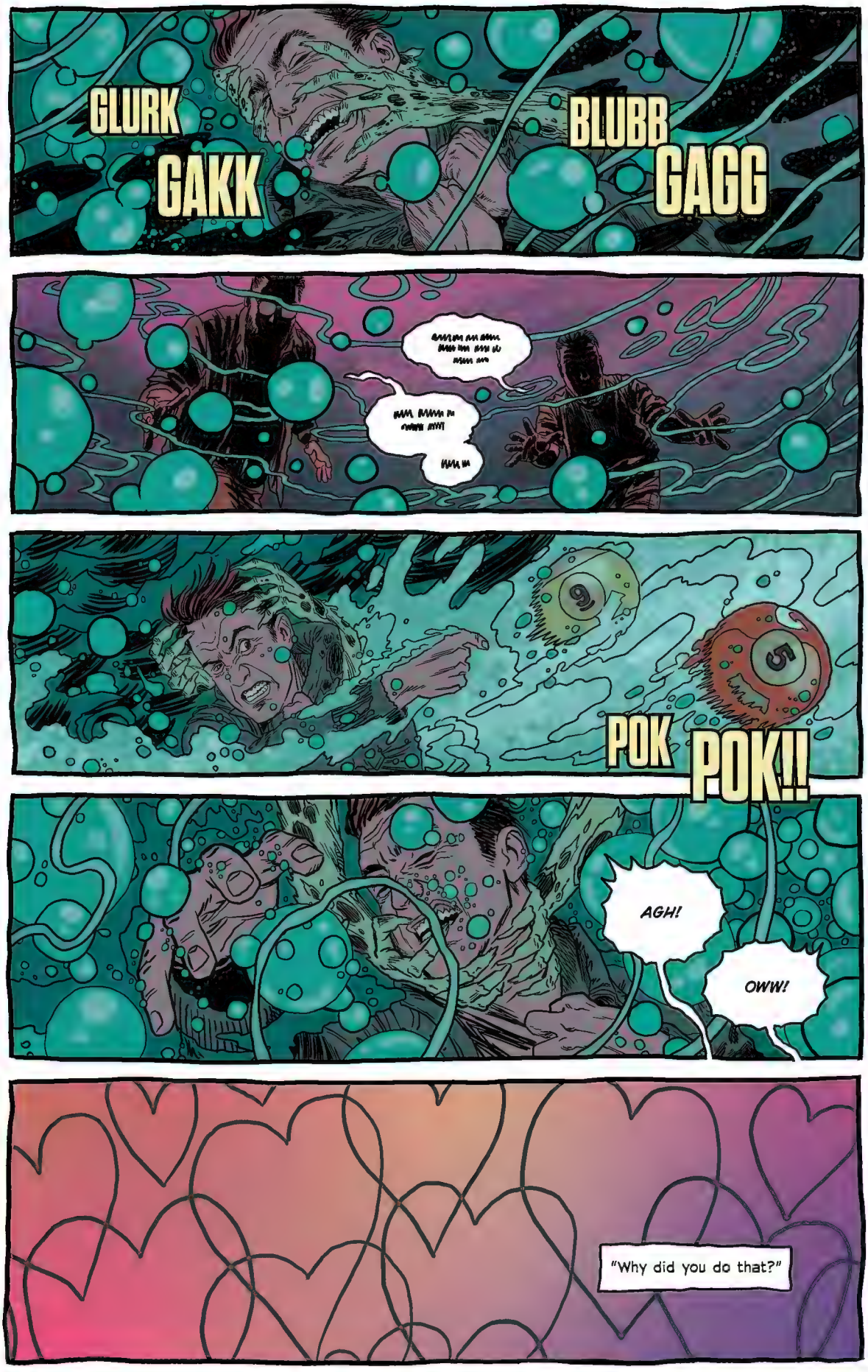
FUCK IT. I'M GOING TO SAVE FARMINGTON.
MYSELF.

Inga Johanning
IS THE
GOOD
GUY

Chapter 7

BLACK RIVER STATE FOREST.
YOOOOOOOOUUU
PEPPER! STOP!
DON'T YOU HEAR THAT?
LIKE A REALLY PRETTY...
SONG.

WEEEEEE
KNOOOOOOOW
GAHK--
YOU
SPLASH!


GLURK
GAKK
BLUBB
GAGG
POK
POK!!
AGH!
OWW!
"Why did you do that?"

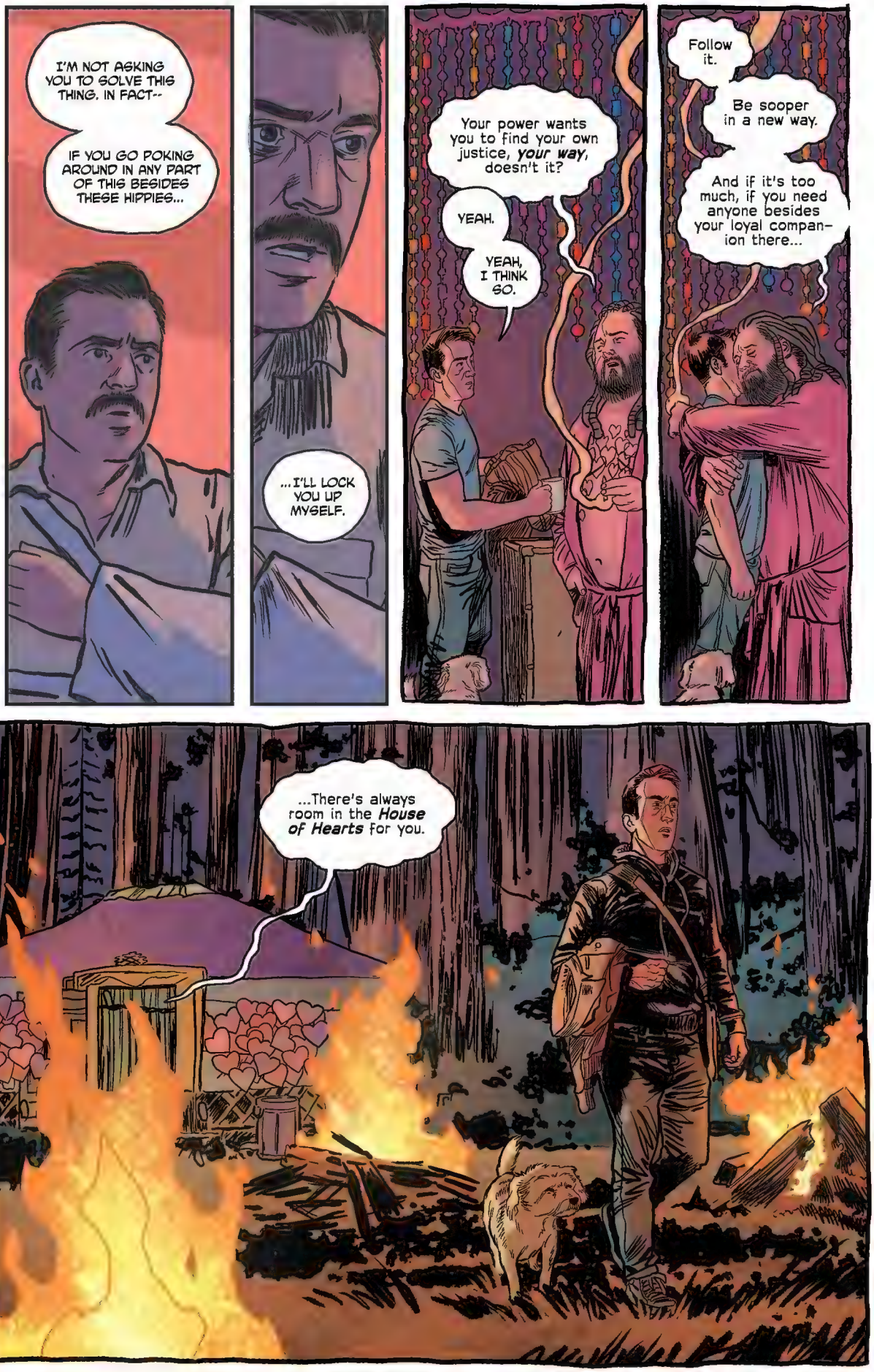
Why'd you jump in the water?
WHY DID I...
WHAT?
My friends said you jumped in the water.
Isn't safe at night in the water.
My friends tried to pull you out but then you threw billiard balls at them.
That wasn't very friendly at all...
...Crossjack.

That's your name, isn't it?
My friends saw in the paper that you--
I'M NOT--
WHAT...
WHAT IS THIS?
WHERE'S MY MASK?
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?!
WHICH ONE OF YOU PUSHED ME IN THE RIVER?!
Here.
Drink.
You'll feel better.
You're in the warm embrace of the Star Tribe.
Here in the people's woods to pray for the soul of America.
None of us pushed you down in the river, we only tried to help you up, Crossjack.
I'M NOT CROSSJACK. I MEAN--
LEGALLY, I'M...
Your mask is right over there with your weapons.

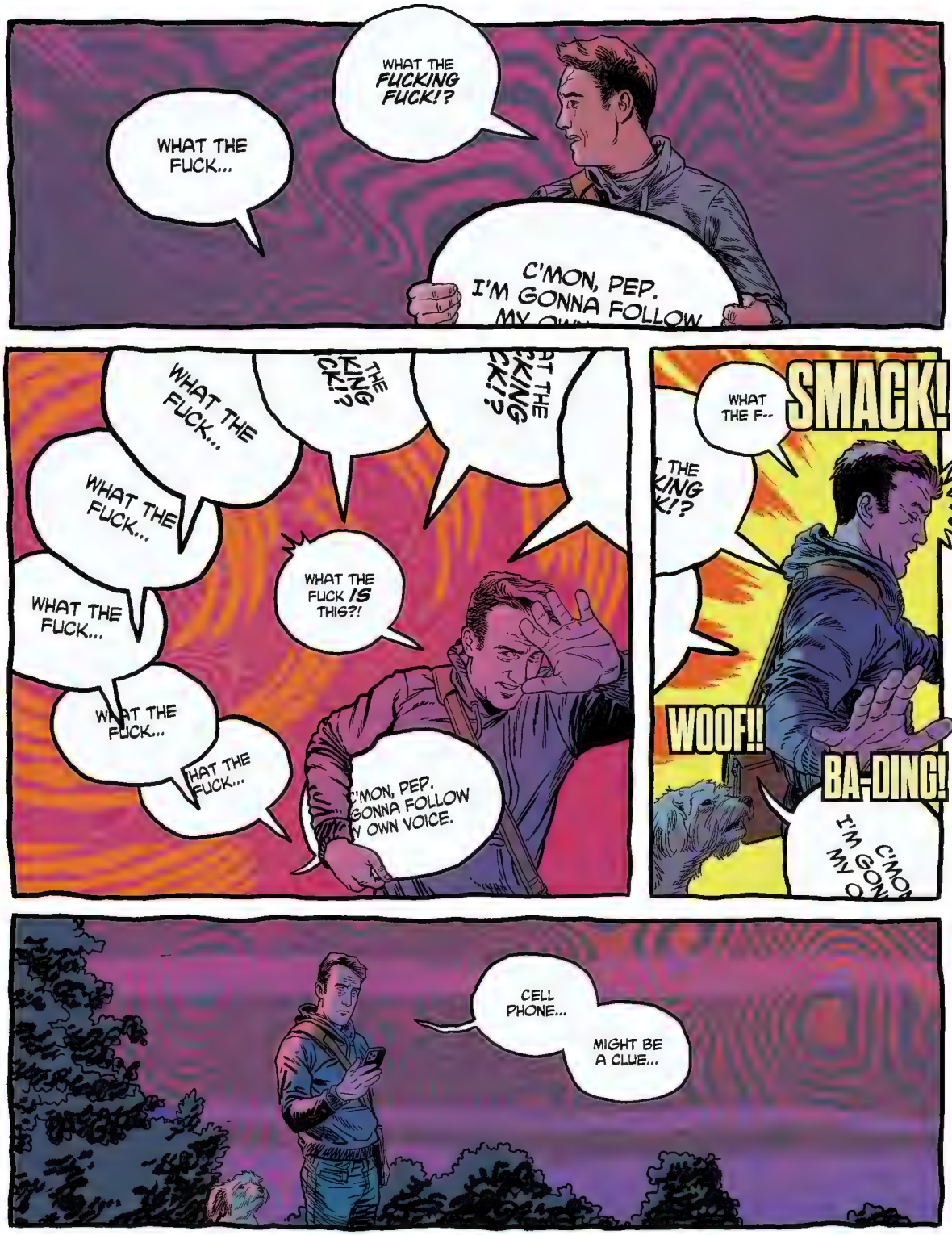
Would you like us to call you Local Man?
NO, THAT'S STUPID...
JACK XAVER: DEFENDER OF FARMINGTON...
THAT'S STUPID TOO, RIGHT?
I GUESS JUST JACK? WHAT ABOUT YOU?
Call me Coochie Poo.
"COOCHIE..."
You *are* a sooper though, right?
You're one of them?
SIP
I USED TO BE, COOCHIE POO.
I USED TO BE.

What are your powers?
I CAN LIKE...
AIM GOOD?
That's it?
YEAH, I DON'T MISS. AND I'M STRONGER AND FASTER THAN PEOPLE.
MOST PEOPLE.
Did you ever meet Cyblade?
WHAT IF I ASK QUESTIONS FIRST?
The Star Tribe is here to help. In the House of Hearts there's only love, and well-wishes for the world. Everyone is welcome.
HOUSE OF HEARTS? IS THAT WHAT'S ALL OVER YOUR CHEST?
These hearts? One for every person I ever loved.
They just appear when the lover moves on.
Once my flesh is covered, I think I'll just float up to heaven.
I feel things deep, Mr. Local Man. So deeply they become my body.
That's my sooper-person power. When I feel things, they are true.
It's why the Star Tribe seeks my teaching.

HERE'S WHAT'S TRUE:
I'M HERE DOING A FAVOR FOR CHIEF BUCHOLZ.
THEY FOUND A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL.
A REALLY GOOD SWIMMER.
FOUND HER DROWNED ON DRY LAND.
YOU WELCOME EVERYBODY, RIGHT?
I WANT TO KNOW IF YOU WELCOMED A CHILD MURDERER TO YOUR CAMP.
Your power tells you things like mine. It tells you when something's right.
You heard a voice out there at the river, didn't you?
I think that voice is your power. It's not just for cue balls and croquet mallets.
It tells you what's right.
You know the Star Tribe didn't hurt that girl.
And you know there's something not quite right about Chief Bucholz.

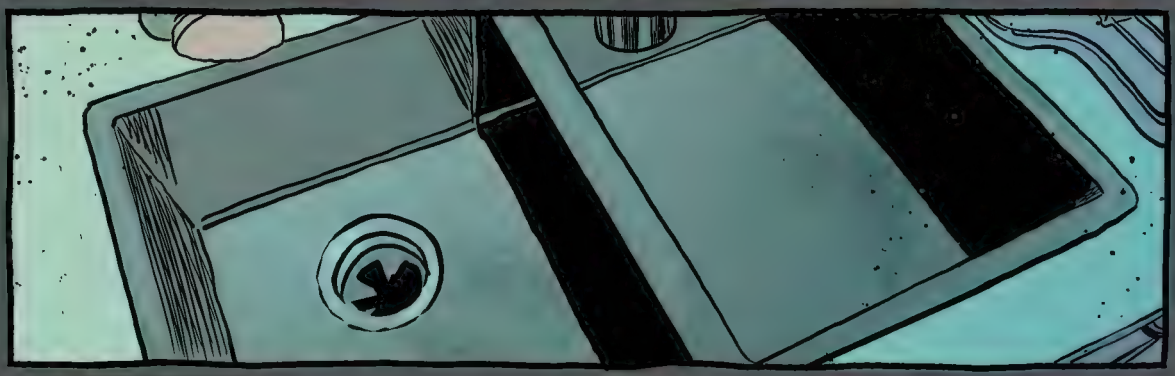

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO SOLVE THIS THING. IN FACT--
IF YOU GO POKING AROUND IN ANY PART OF THIS BESIDES THESE HIPPIES...
...I'LL LOCK YOU UP MYSELF.
Your power wants you to find your own justice, ***your way***, doesn't it?
YEAH.
YEAH, I THINK SO.
Follow it.
Be sooper in a new way.
And if it's too much, if you need anyone besides your loyal companion there...
...There's always room in the ***House of Hearts*** for you.

COOCHIE. SHIT, MAN.
THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL. THAT'S WHERE THOSE HEARTS CAME FROM?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE A, WHATEVER YOU CALL IT, A SOOPER--
A... A YOUNG-BLOOD.
I'M NOT.
THERE'S ONE OF THESE FOR EVERY-BODY WHOSE ASS I ATE AT COACHELLA 2012.
I WAS GOING FOR A WORLD RECORD.
GO UP TO THE KITCHEN AND GRAB ME SOME MORE TEA.
"WE JUST SERVED THAT NARC A HEROIC DOSE OF PSILOCYBIN."
C'MON, PEP. I'M GONNA FOLLOW MY OWN VOICE.
WHAT THE FUCK...
C'MON, PEP. I'M GONNA FOLLOW MY OWN VOICE.


WHAT THE FUCK...
WHAT THE FUCKING FUCK!?
C'MON, PEP. I'M GONNA FOLLOW
WHAT THE FUCK...
WHAT THE FUCK...
WHAT THE FUCK...
WHAT THE FUCK IS THIS?!
C'MON, PEP. GONNA FOLLOW Y OWN VOICE.
WHAT THE F--
SMACK!
WOOF!!
BA-DING!
CELL PHONE...
MIGHT BE A CLUE...
Inga Johanning Cell
What R U doing?
Jack Xave
Working. CrossJ@<K stuff.
More superheroing already?
Boy, when it rains it pours.

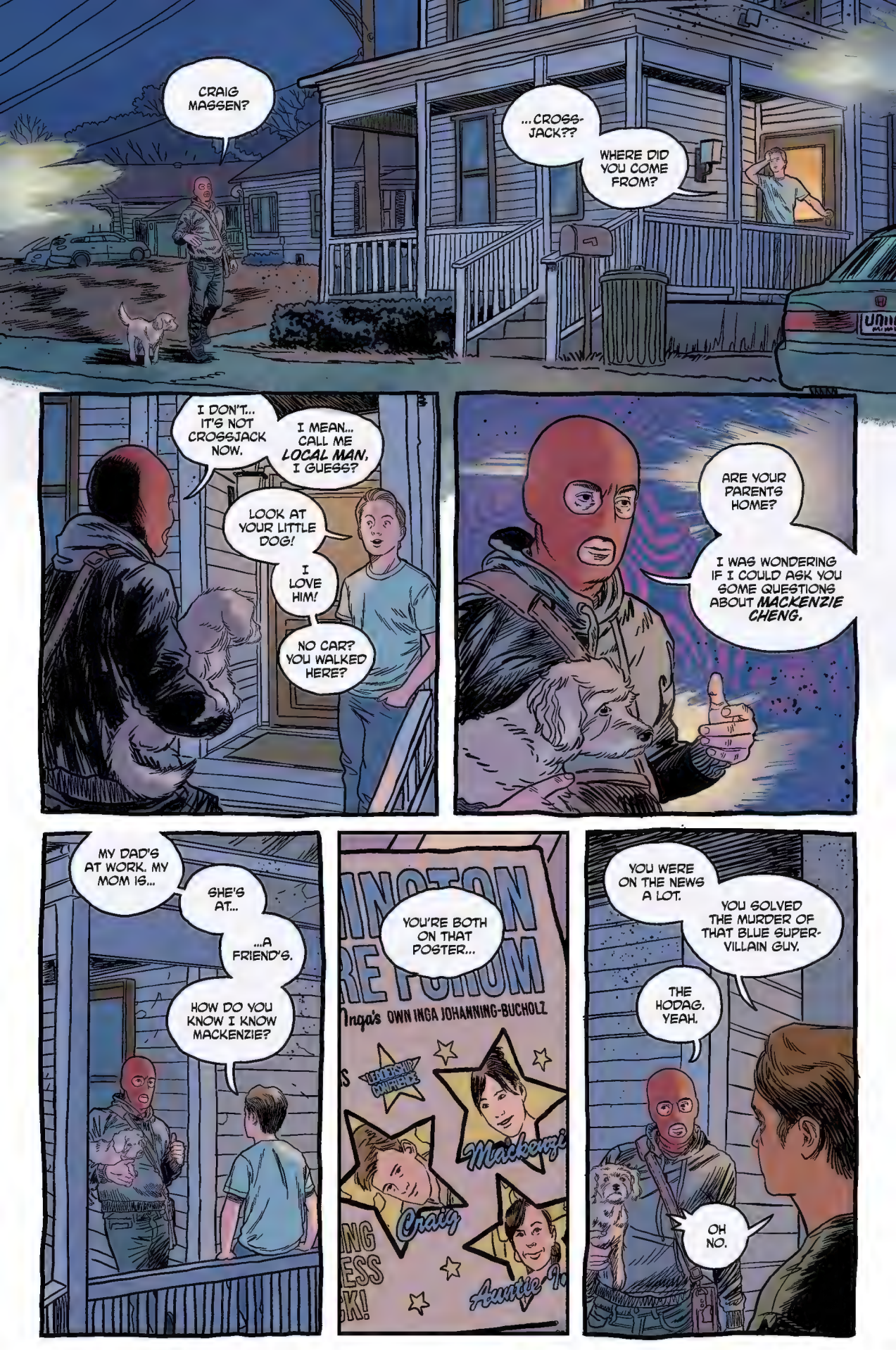
Well, if you can wrap it up quickly...
Brian is still at the station and the kids are sound asleep.
I've got something here for you...
Inga Johanning Cell
I've got something here for you...
HOLY SHIT.
INGA SAYS YOU'RE TRYING TO GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER.
TRYING TO BE A GOOD GUY.
WOOF!!
YES, OF COURSE I'M STILL FOLLOWING MY OWN VOICE, PEP.
CH-CLICK
I JUST GOTTA TAKE CARE OF ONE...
THING...
FIRST...

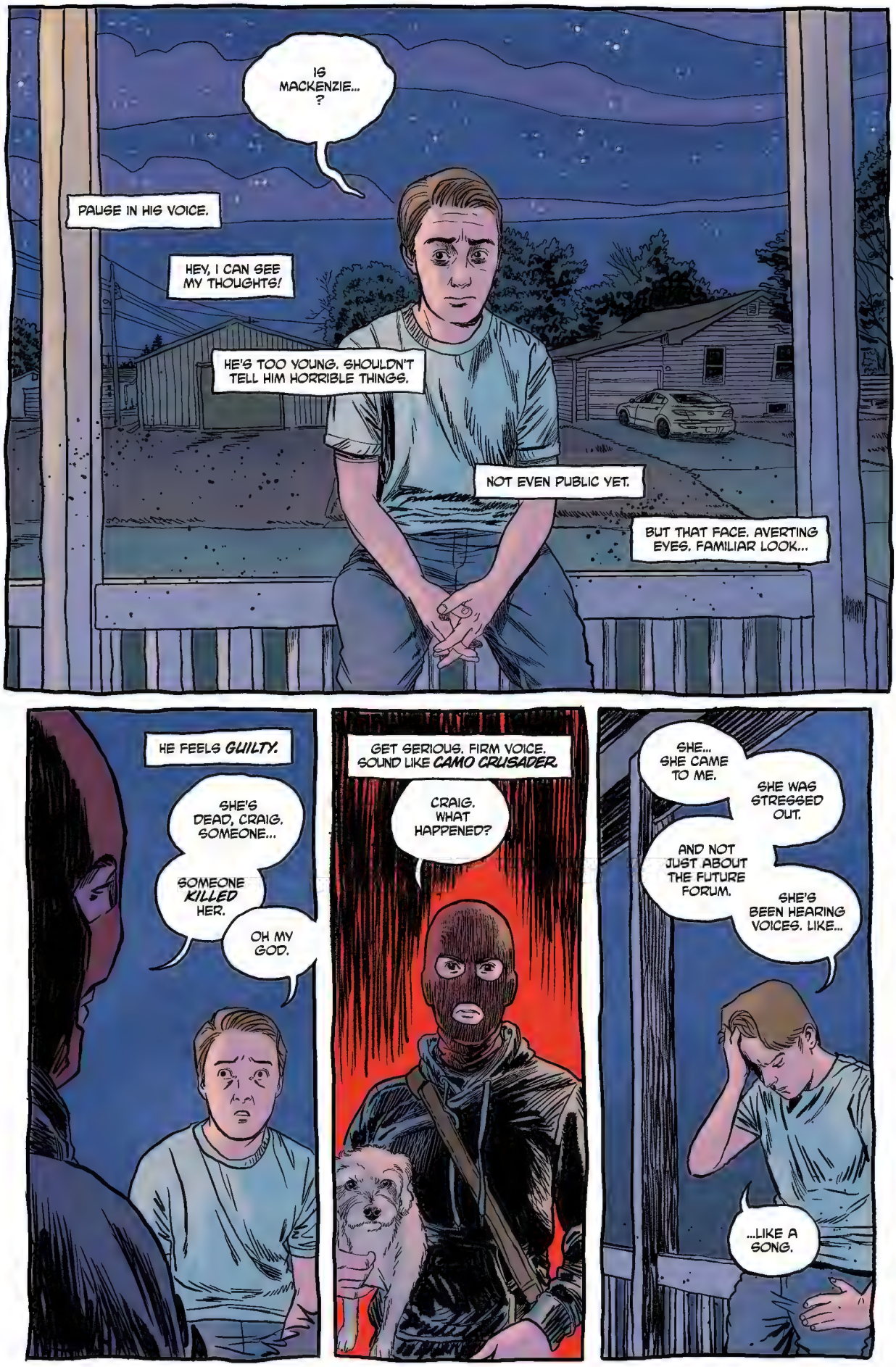
BA-DING!
...THE FUCK?
I got something we can put in there...
MOMMY?
CARMIE! IT'S LATE!
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE SLEEPING.
I KNOW. BUT I CAN'T FALL ASLEEP...
YOU'VE BEEN ACTING WEIRD ALL NIGHT.
LIKE, REALLY WEIRD.
ARE YOU SCARED OF SOMETHING?
WHAT?
NO, NO HONEY. I'M JUST BUSY.
THE BAKERY AND THE FUTURE FORUM, AND ALL THOSE YOUNG BUSINESS LEADERS AND Y'KNOW...
I'M JUST DEALING WITH A LOT OF ADULT PRESSURE IS ALL.
BUT THIS'LL ALL BE OVER SOON, OKAY?

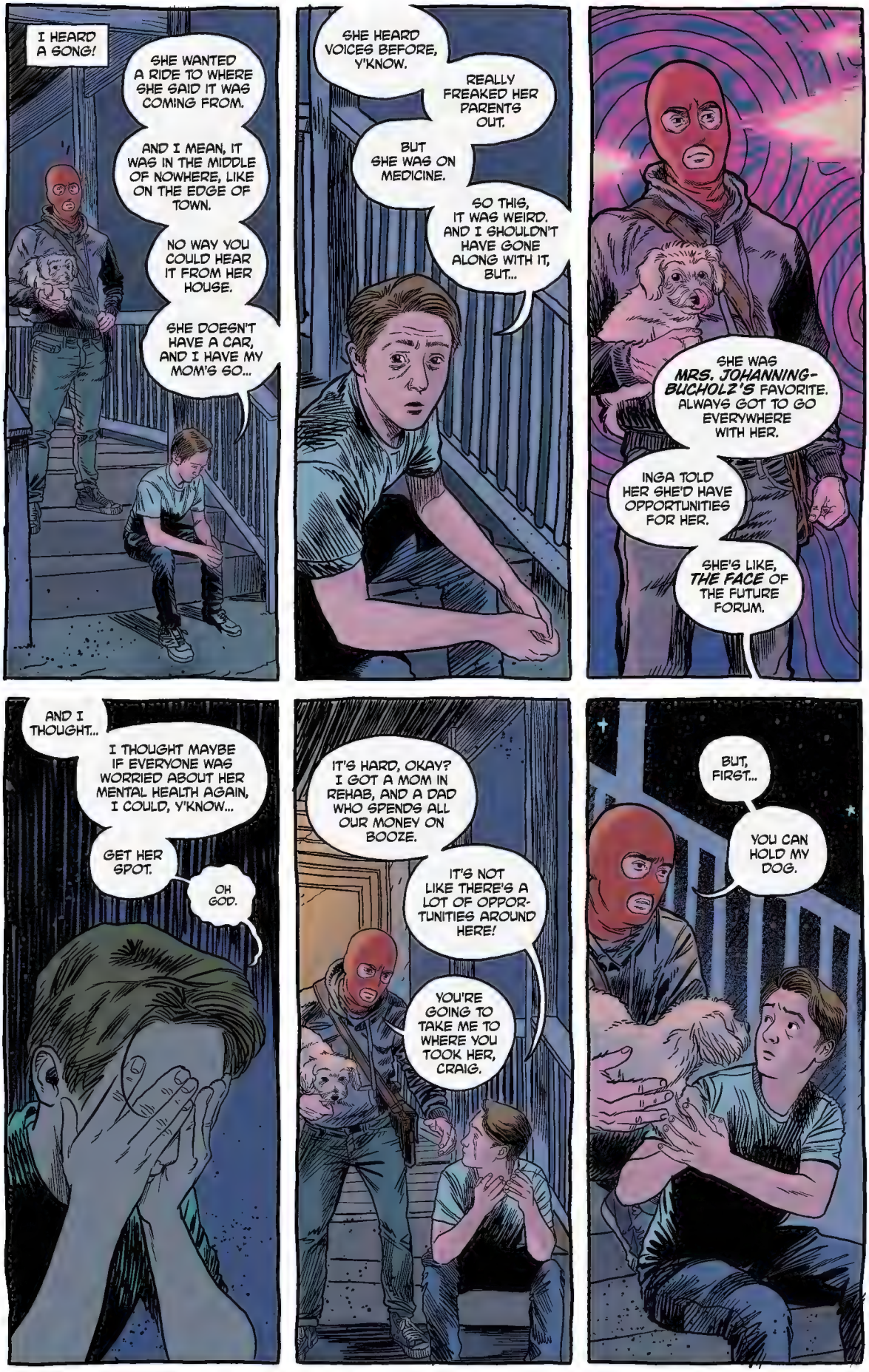


AND THEN, EVERYTHING WILL BE BETTER.
MY JOB.
OUR FAMILY.

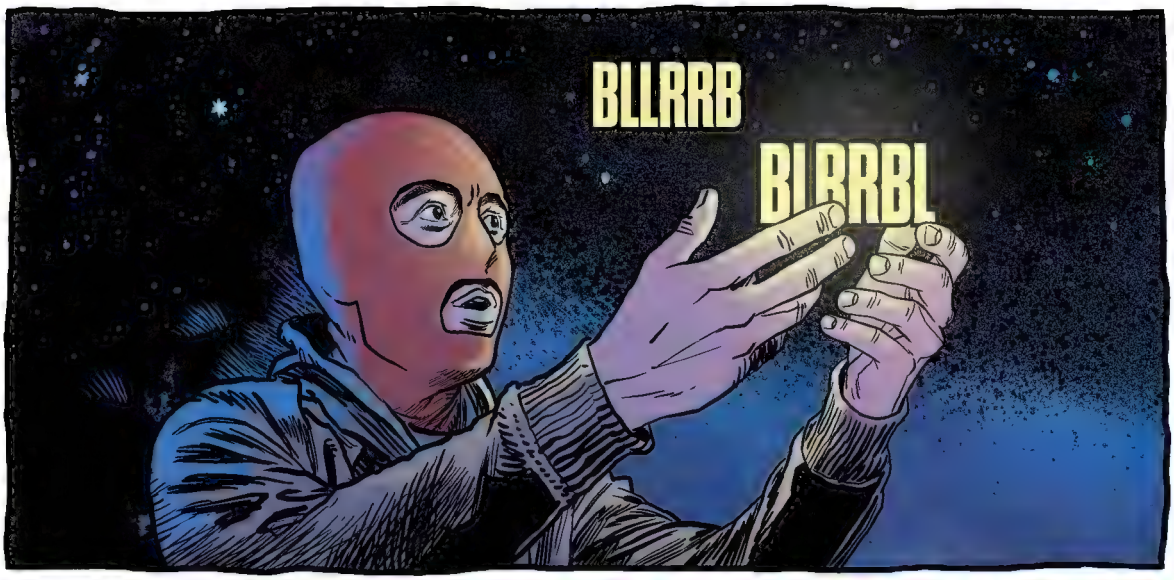
AND FARMINGTON TOO.

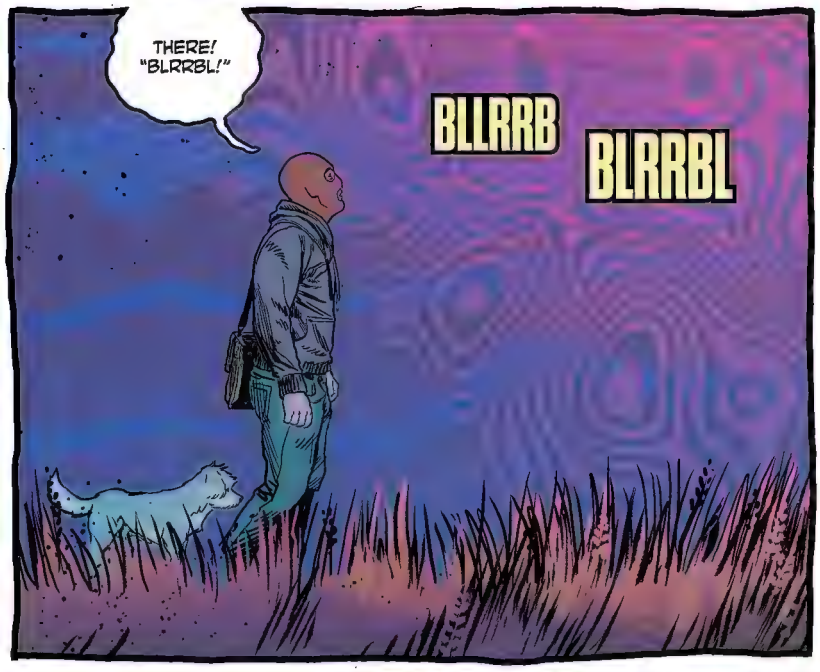

CRAIG MASSEN?
...CROSS-JACK??
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?
I DON'T... IT'S NOT CROSSJACK NOW.
I MEAN... CALL ME LOCAL MAN, I GUESS?
LOOK AT YOUR LITTLE DOG!
I LOVE HIM!
NO CAR? YOU WALKED HERE?
ARE YOUR PARENTS HOME?
I WAS WONDERING IF I COULD ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT MACKENZIE CHENG.
MY DAD'S AT WORK. MY MOM IS...
SHE'S AT...
...A FRIEND'S.
HOW DO YOU KNOW I KNOW MACKENZIE?
YOU'RE BOTH ON THAT POSTER...
Inga's OWN INGA JOHANNING-BUCHOLZ
Craig
YOU WERE ON THE NEWS A LOT.
YOU SOLVED THE MURDER OF THAT BLUE SUPER-VILLAIN GUY.
THE HODAG. YEAH.
OH NO.


IS MACKENZIE...?
PAUSE IN HIS VOICE.
HEY, I CAN SEE MY THOUGHTS!
HE'S TOO YOUNG. SHOULDN'T TELL HIM HORRIBLE THINGS.
NOT EVEN PUBLIC YET.
BUT THAT FACE. AVERTING EYES. FAMILIAR LOOK...
HE FEELS GUILTY.
SHE'S DEAD, CRAIG. SOMEONE...
SOMEONE KILLED HER.
OH MY GOD.
GET SERIOUS. FIRM VOICE. SOUND LIKE CAMO CRUSADER.
CRAIG. WHAT HAPPENED?
SHE... SHE CAME TO ME.
SHE WAS STRESSED OUT.
AND NOT JUST ABOUT THE FUTURE FORUM.
SHE'S BEEN HEARING VOICES. LIKE...
...LIKE A SONG.


I HEARD A SONG!
SHE WANTED A RIDE TO WHERE SHE SAID IT WAS COMING FROM.
AND I MEAN, IT WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, LIKE ON THE EDGE OF TOWN.
NO WAY YOU COULD HEAR IT FROM HER HOUSE.
SHE DOESN'T HAVE A CAR, AND I HAVE MY MOM'S SO...
SHE HEARD VOICES BEFORE, Y'KNOW.
REALLY FREAKED HER PARENTS OUT.
BUT SHE WAS ON MEDICINE.
SO THIS, IT WAS WEIRD. AND I SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE ALONG WITH IT, BUT...
SHE WAS MRS. JOHANNING-BUCHOLZ'S FAVORITE. ALWAYS GOT TO GO EVERYWHERE WITH HER.
INGA TOLD HER SHE'D HAVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HER.
SHE'S LIKE, THE FACE OF THE FUTURE FORUM.
AND I THOUGHT...
I THOUGHT MAYBE IF EVERYONE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HER MENTAL HEALTH AGAIN, I COULD, Y'KNOW...
GET HER SPOT.
OH GOD.
IT'S HARD, OKAY? I GOT A MOM IN REHAB, AND A DAD WHO SPENDS ALL OUR MONEY ON BOOZE.
IT'S NOT LIKE THERE'S A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES AROUND HERE!
YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE ME TO WHERE YOU TOOK HER, CRAIG.
BUT, FIRST...
YOU CAN HOLD MY DOG.

IT WAS AROUND HERE.
OH. WE'RE HERE.
SEEMS LIKE WE WERE JUST ON THE PORCH.
SHE...
SHE WALKED STRAIGHT OUT INTO THAT FIELD.
...
ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH.
YEAH, CRAIG, I'M GREAT!
WAS THAT WEIRD? KIND OF LOUD.
DARK. REALLY DARK.
COULD MISS SOMETHING. NO, I'M THE CAN'T MISS KID.
MACKENZIE HEARD A SONG. I HEARD A SONG.
MAYBE I JUST HAVE TO LOOK.
MAYBE I JUST HAVE TO LOOK.
BUT NOT AT THAT.
LOOK FOR THE SONG OF WATER.
A SOUND LIKE SWWSH OR FLLLSSH OR...

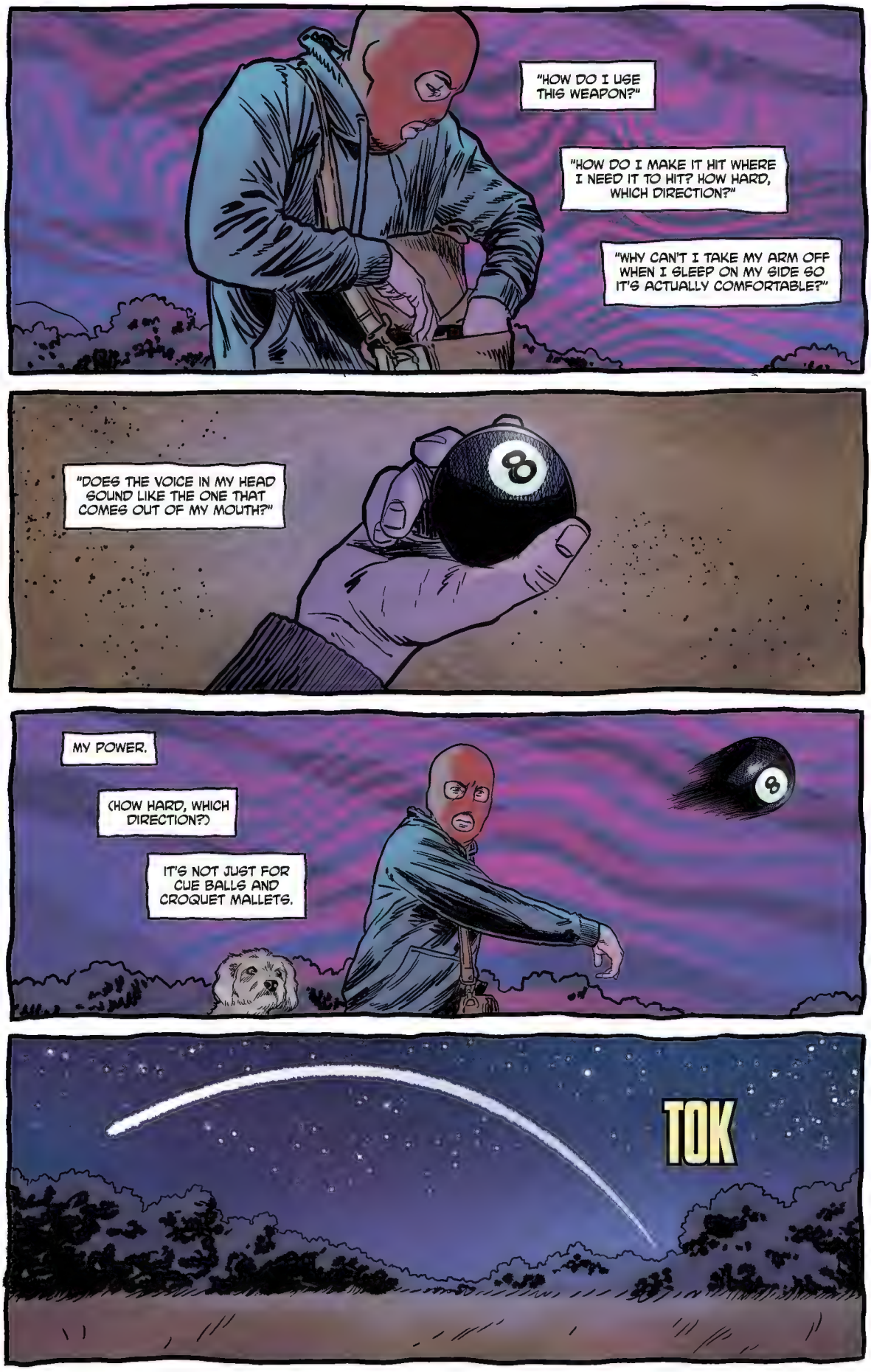

BLLRRB
BLRRBL


THERE! "BLRRBL!"
BLLRRB
BLRRBL

WUNK
AGH!

THE HELL'D I HIT-- ?
THERE. THE SINGER OF THE SONG.
NOT ENOUGH TO DROWN A PERSON. OVERFLOW DRAINAGE.
FROM SOMEWHERE WITHOUT A CONNECTION TO A SEWER LINE.
BLLRRB
BLRRBL

SOMEWHERE OUT IN THE DARK.
MY POWER WANTS ME TO FIND MY OWN JUSTICE.
MY POWER ANSWERS QUESTIONS.


"HOW DO I USE THIS WEAPON?"
"HOW DO I MAKE IT HIT WHERE I NEED IT TO HIT? HOW HARD, WHICH DIRECTION?"
"WHY CAN'T I TAKE MY ARM OFF WHEN I SLEEP ON MY SIDE SO IT'S ACTUALLY COMFORTABLE?"
"DOES THE VOICE IN MY HEAD SOUND LIKE THE ONE THAT COMES OUT OF MY MOUTH?"
MY POWER.
(HOW HARD, WHICH DIRECTION?)
IT'S NOT JUST FOR CUE BALLS AND CROQUET MALLETS.
TOK

THERE WE GO.
"TOK."
I LOVE A "TOK."
FOLLOW MY VOICE...
MY POWER...
AJ SHERMAN COMMERCIAL STORAGE
BUT...
TO WHERE?
THIS PLACE IS SINGING BUT...
THERE'S NO SIGN...
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
CREEEK

WATER.
THE CAN'T MISS KID.
I'M A DETECTIVE. CRIMEFIGHTER.
SPLISH
I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO SOLVE THIS THING.
IN FACT-- IF YOU GO POKING AROUND IN ANY PART OF THIS BESIDES THESE HIPPIES, I'LL LOCK YOU UP MYSELF.
NO. NOT WATER.
GHEK.
HEAVY. GREASY.
WHAT'S THE WORD?
MEAT CANDLE? BEEF WAX?
TALLOW.
CAN'T MISS KID.
I USED TO BE A SUPERHERO...

BA-DING
THERE'S NO SIGN...
STORAGE CAM 1
INGA?
LATE NIGHT.
IS EVERY-THING OK AT THE STATION?
LIKE YOU ALWAYS SAY, "WHEN IT RAINS, IT POURS."
INGA. WE HAVE TO TALK...
IT'S ABOUT MACKENZIE CHENG...
WHAT...
WHAT ABOUT MACKENZIE CHENG?
GOODS, INC.

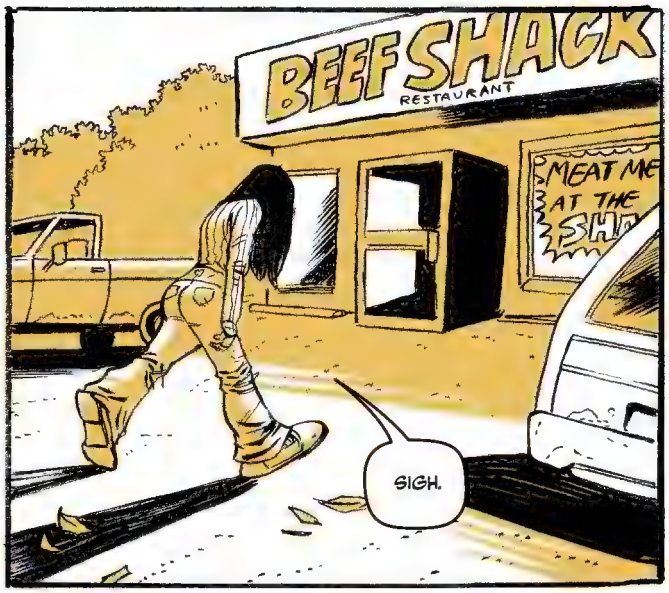
YOU USED TO BE SUPERHEROES TOO...
FOURTH GEN.
KING BEE.
MELTDOWN.
SEASCAPE.
PEEKABOO.
THE SLICK.
I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF YOU.
SEASCAPE
UNTIL I GOT SENT UP TO THE BIG LEAGUES.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU. I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO...
BUT NOW I KNOW ME. I'M A DETECTIVE ON THE HUNT FOR A MURDERER, AND MY POWERS WILL LEAD ME TO THE KILLER. THEY ALWAYS DO.
I'M GONNA GET JUSTICE FOR MACKENZIE CHENG.
AND I'M GOING TO GET JUSTICE FOR YOU T--
FOR YOU T--
JUSTICE FOR--
BLLRGHF.

EXTRA image
CROSSJACK
ON THE RUN!
image
7

It's been six months since my superhero boyfriend dumped me and left town.
Six months since I decided I'd save Farmington, Wisconsin without him.
In that time, he's been raiding evil compounds and fighting aliens.
I saw on the internet this morning that he infiltrated the Faceless Horde to rescue Third Gen's billionaire owner.
And in that time, I... well...
I've been doing stuff, okay!?
Lots of stuff. You just can't save a town overnight is all. You have to have a plan. A couple of 'em.

Plan 1: I ran for Mayor.
A YOUNG POLITICIAN FOR A NEW ERA!
I'LL BRING CHANGE! HOPE!
LIVESTOCK VETERINARIAN
TOWN HALL
I'LL CHANGE THE STATE SONG TO BUSH'S "EVERYTHING ZEN!"
What we need now!
VOTE 4 INGA!
But that didn't go very far.
WE DON'T REALLY RUN FOR THE JOB HERE, SEE. WE ALL JUST TAKE TURNS.
I'M MAYOR THIS MONTH.
THIS COW'S UP AFTER THAT.
Plan 2: I decided to start a little smaller, and throw a job fair.
LET'S BRING INNOVATION! PRIDE!
FOR RENT.
AND SOME OF THAT HOT CAPITALISM!
Employment OPPORTUNITIES INSIDE!
Learn a NEW SKIL
But no one good showed up.
TODAY!
FACELESS
OUT!
...BUT WE OFFER COMPETITIVE WAGES AND DENTAL INSURANCE!
Plans 3-8 went about as well. Maybe worse.
This town is sick, dying a little every day.
WELCOME TO FARMINGTON
Run while you still can!
And while Jack Xaver is off somewhere living it up, the price of trying to do good my way is leaving me empty.

My purse, and my stomach.
grrrmbbl


BEEF SHACK
RESTAURANT
MEAT ME
AT THE
SIGH.

WHEN I SAID GET OFF THE COUCH, I MEANT RIDE A BIKE OR MOW THE LAWN, NOT PLAY FRIGGIN' JESUS.
HERE'S LUNCH.
YEAH. OKAY.
THANKS MOM.
BACON DOUBLE $1.89
BACON W BACON $2.25

This town is sick, dying a little every day.
BILL

And maybe this is why.
THAT'S A HAIRY EYEBALL IF I EVER SEEN ONE.

MR. XAVER!
HOWDY, INGA, HAVEN'T SEEN YA SINCE...
WELL, Y'KNOW, IT'S TOO BAD.
I ALWAYS LIKED HAVING YA AROUND.
YEAH. YEAH, I MISS YOU AND LILA TOO.
PEPPER DOIN' OKAY?
STILL HEALTHY.
WHICH IS MORE N' I CAN SAY FOR ANYBODY HERE.
NOT A FAN OF THE BEEF SHACK, HUH?
I JUST COME FOR THE CONVERSATION AND THE COFFEE.
I GROW MY OWN FOOD.
OH, I REMEMBER DINNER AT THE XAVERS'. FRESH VEGGIES, AND EGGS.
AND THAT BREAD!
IF EVERYONE ATE LIKE YOU GUYS, THEY'D HAVE ENOUGH ENERGY TO SAVE THEMSELVES.
...
Plan 9.
MR. XAVER...
I'M GOING TO START A BAKERY.
Next! How to make an American Pie!

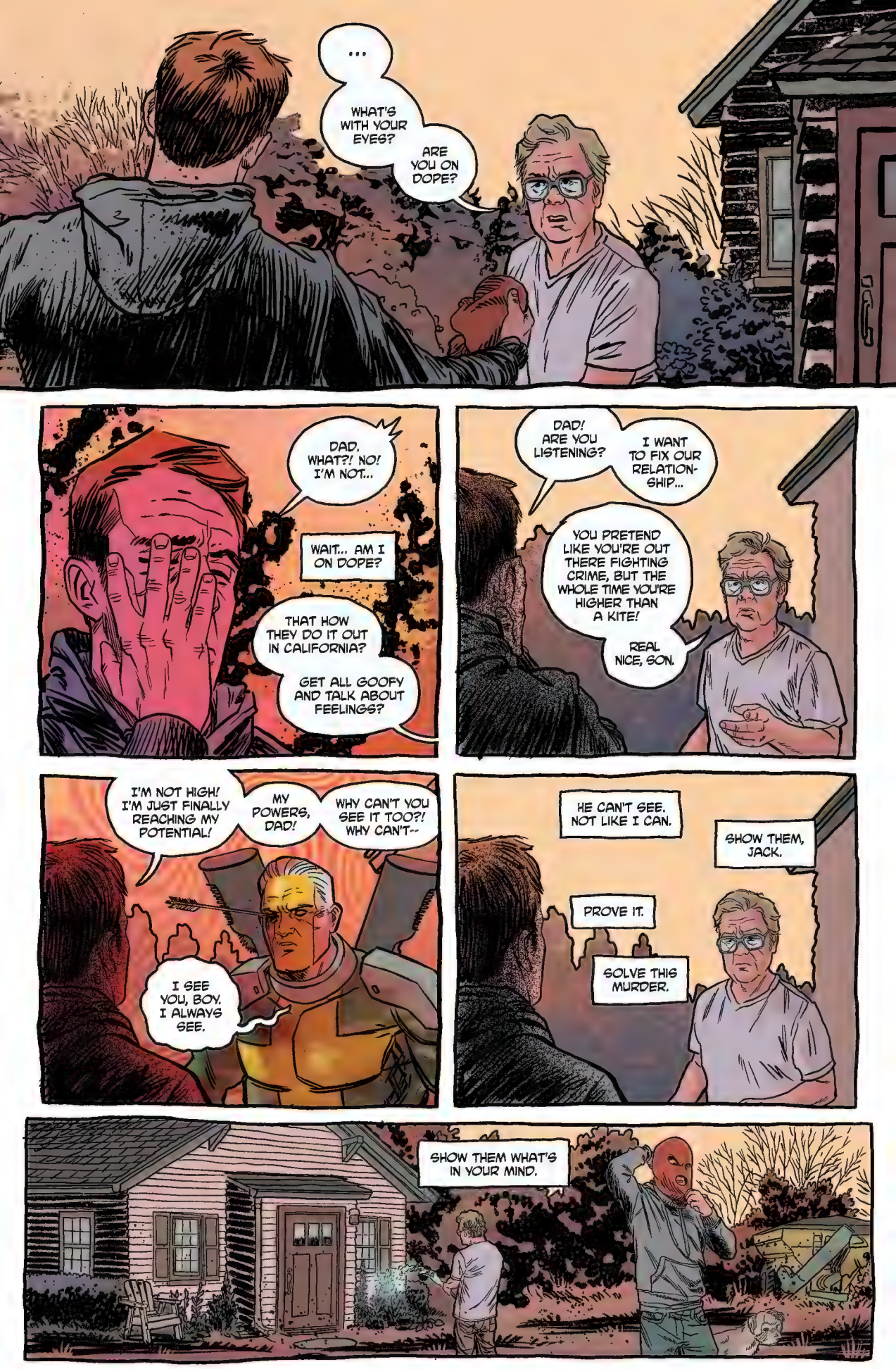
Chapter 8

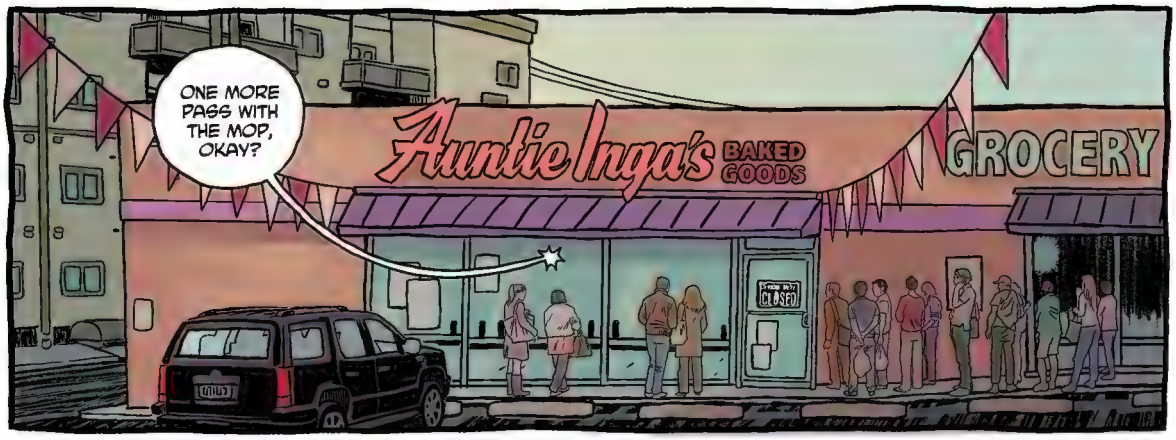
THEN.
HNF.
JEEZ, INGA.
THEM CRATES ARE HEAVY AS HELL.
WHAT DO YOU GOT IN THERE?
JUST SOME STUFF THEY WERE CLEARING OUT OF THE 4TH GEN CENTER.
GOT A GOOD DEAL.
ONE DAY LATER.
ONE WEEK LATER.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
ONE MONTH LATER.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
ONE YEAR LATER.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
ONE DECADE LATER.
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP

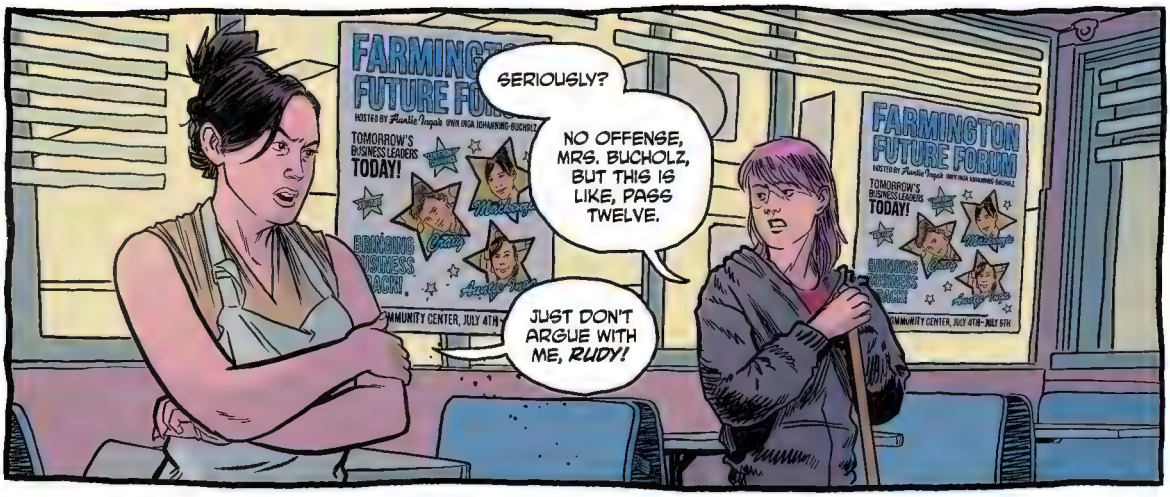
TWO WEEKS AGO.
left behind!!!!

NOW
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
DRIP
WOOOOSHHHHH
DID YOU SLEEP OUT HERE ALL NIGHT?
YOU KNOW WE GOT A BED FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS.
I DON'T...
I DON'T REMEMBER, ACTUALLY.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE THOUGH.
I LIVE HERE.
RIGHT IN THERE.
I JUST...
I HAD SOME TIME TO THINK LAST NIGHT WHILE I WAS OUT ON PATROL.
I KNOW YOU DON'T LIKE WHEN I GO OUT ON PATROL.
YOU DON'T LIKE HAVING A SUPERHERO IN THE BASEMENT.
BUT, I THINK I FINALLY UNDERSTAND.

WHEN I LEFT FOR THIRD GEN YOU THOUGHT I'D COME BACK.
THAT I'D BRING GOOD THINGS WITH ME.
THAT I'D CHANGE AS A PERSON.
BE A SERIOUS, HARDWORKING GUY.
BUT THEN I DIDN'T.
I DIDN'T DO THAT.
AND WHEN I CAME BACK FROM L.A., I GUESS I FIGURED YOU'D SPENT THAT ENTIRE TIME ANGRY AND BITTER.
LIKE, YOU'D JUST TOTALLY WRITTEN ME OFF.
BUT YOU DIDN'T. YOU SPENT THAT TIME TRYING TO MAKE FARMINGTON A BETTER PLACE.
AND TO DO THAT, YOU WORKED WITH *INGA*.
AND I CAN SEE IT NOW.
THAT MOMENT, WHEN YOU DECIDED TO KEEP HER IN YOUR LIFE...
...SOMEONE *I'D* LOVED SO MUCH...
THAT WAS YOU TRYING TO STAY CONNECTED TO ME, DAD.
THAT MEANS THERE'S STILL SOMETHING...
SOMETHING WE CAN GROW TOGETHER.
THE SEEDS ARE ALL THERE.
IT JUST NEEDS A LITTLE *WATER*.


...
WHAT'S WITH YOUR EYES?
ARE YOU ON DOPE?
DAD. WHAT?! NO! I'M NOT...
WAIT... AM I ON DOPE?
THAT HOW THEY DO IT OUT IN CALIFORNIA?
GET ALL GOOFY AND TALK ABOUT FEELINGS?
DAD! ARE YOU LISTENING?
I WANT TO FIX OUR RELATION-SHIP...
YOU PRETEND LIKE YOU'RE OUT THERE FIGHTING CRIME, BUT THE WHOLE TIME YOU'RE HIGHER THAN A KITE!
REAL NICE, SON.
I'M NOT HIGH! I'M JUST FINALLY REACHING MY POTENTIAL!
MY POWERS, DAD!
WHY CAN'T YOU SEE IT TOO?! WHY CAN'T--
I SEE YOU, BOY. I ALWAYS SEE.
HE CAN'T SEE. NOT LIKE I CAN.
SHOW THEM, JACK.
PROVE IT.
SOLVE THIS MURDER.
SHOW THEM WHAT'S IN YOUR MIND.


ONE MORE PASS WITH THE MOP, OKAY?
Auntie Inga's BAKED GOODS
GROCERY
CLOSED


SERIOUSLY?
NO OFFENSE, MRS. BUCHOLZ, BUT THIS IS LIKE, PASS TWELVE.
JUST DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, RUDY!
FARMINGTON FUTURE FORUM
TOMORROW'S BUSINESS LEADERS TODAY!

IT HAS TO BE PERFECT EVEN WITH EVERYTHING AGAINST US.
THE CAFE HAS TO OPEN. THE FUTURE FORUM HAS TO GO OFF.
EVERYONE HAS TO BE TAKEN CARE OF.
JUST... DO THIS FOR ME, AND I'VE GOT A PROMOTION FOR YOU.

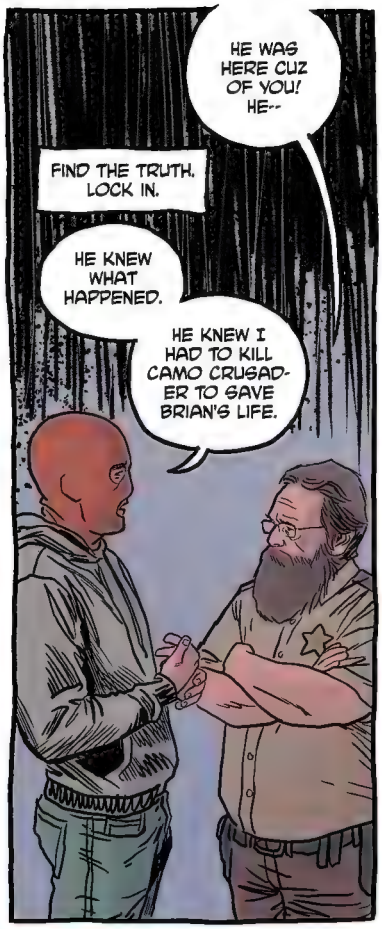
I WAS GOING TO GIVE IT TO MACKENZIE BUT SHE...
IT'LL BE HARD AT FIRST.
REALLY HARD.
YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGHT. BUT IN THE END, IT'LL BE WORTH IT.
CAN I GET ANOTHER BUCK AN HOUR?

YEAH.
YEAH, YOU CAN GET ANOTHER BUCK AN HOUR.
SWEET.
OH, HEY. LOOK AT THIS...

VINTAGE CAMO CRUSADER.
I MISSED IT BEFORE, I GUESS.
I WONDER IF IT'S FROM THE SHOOTER?
HE WAS A CAMO-STALKER, RIGHT?
DOORS OPEN IN FIVE.
NEW JOB STARTS LATER THIS AFTERNOON.
I'LL TAKE THAT.
DOUGHNUTS
MUFFINS
CAMO CRUSADER.
FUCKING PRICK.
DONUTS
Have a Sweet Day
WISCONSIN
YOU NEVER THOUGHT I COULD DO IT.
ALWAYS WANTED TO PUSH ME OUT.
BUT YOU SEE THIS?

Storage Cam 2
Yesterday 10:37 PM
THIS IS A PROBLEM ONLY I CAN HANDLE.
AND THEN I'LL GET THE MONEY.
I'LL MAKE THE INVESTORS HAPPY, AND I'LL PUT THIS TOWN BACK ON TRACK...
ME!
SLAM
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
Jack >
Jack Xaver
I got something we can put in there...
Yesterday
Hey.
U up?
Delivered
Message
space

Inga Johanning Cell
U up?
Jack Xaver
Yeah, meet up?
I'll send you the place.
OKAY, PEP...
LIVESTOCK VETERINARIAN
MOMENT OF TRUTH.
CITY HALL
HOW CAN I HELP YOU?
HI, I NEED A PROPERTY RECORD...
OH, HECK NO.
OFFICER KOPECKI?
I AIN'T DEALIN' WITH ANY OF YER CRAP TODAY, XAVER!
IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU, I'M ON GODDARN DESK DUTY!
YOU CAN GO SCREW, YOU SONOVABITCH!
THE GUY YOU SHOT.
THAT YOU HAD TO SHOOT.
HE WAS LIKE YOU.
A CHRISTIAN.
THE TRUTH.


HE WAS HERE CUZ OF YOU! HE--
FIND THE TRUTH. LOCK IN.
HE KNEW WHAT HAPPENED.
HE KNEW I HAD TO KILL CAMO CRUSADER TO SAVE BRIAN'S LIFE.

THE CHIEF ASKED ME TO LIE.
IT'S A SIN TO LIE LIKE THAT. I LIED.
TO SAVE FARMINGTON.
BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST KNOWING THE TRUTH.
IT'S ALSO WHAT WE DO WITH IT.
MY POWERS.

OFFICER...
ALAN.
HAS ANYONE ASKED ABOUT *YOU*?
ARE YOU OK?
ALL THE HURT. ALL THE GUILT.

I SEE IT ALL NOW.

EVERYTHING I NEED TO.

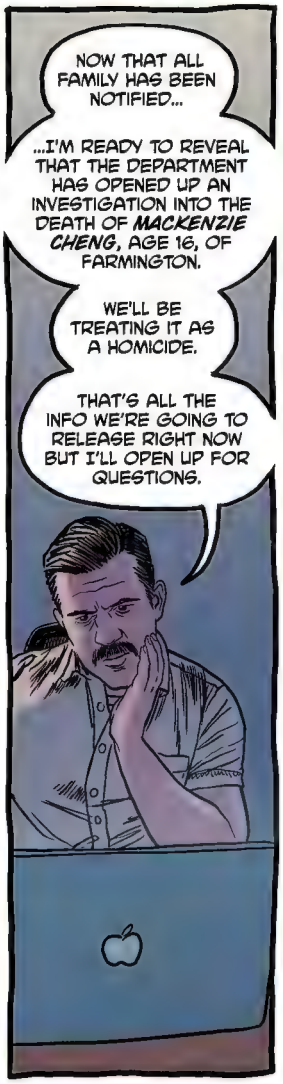
I'LL GET YOU THAT INFORMATION N' SO.
GIVE ME A COUPLE A' HOURS.

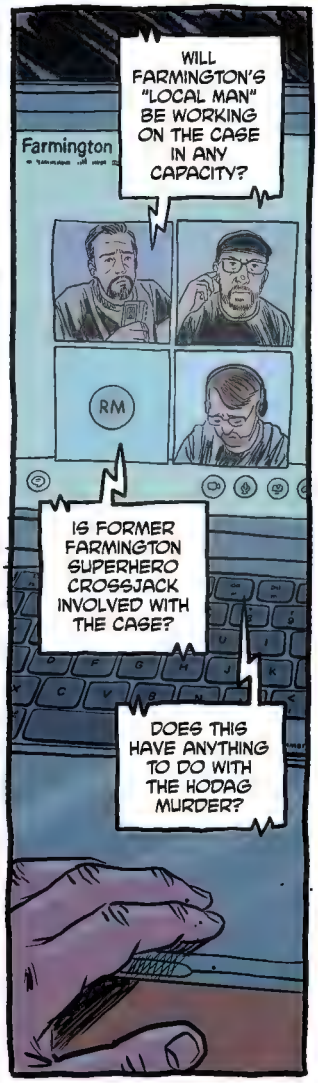
I CAN'T MISS.

FARMINGTON
POLICE DEPARTMENT
BEGINNING CONFERENCE CALL.
Police
JJ'S TRACTOR & TIRE

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING.
AND THANK YOU FOR AGREEING TO STAY OUT OF THE HEAT FOR THIS PRESS EVENT.
FIGURED IT MIGHT BE A NICE CHANGE OF PACE, DOING THIS INSIDE.
WHERE WE HAVE CENTRAL AIR.
HEHEH

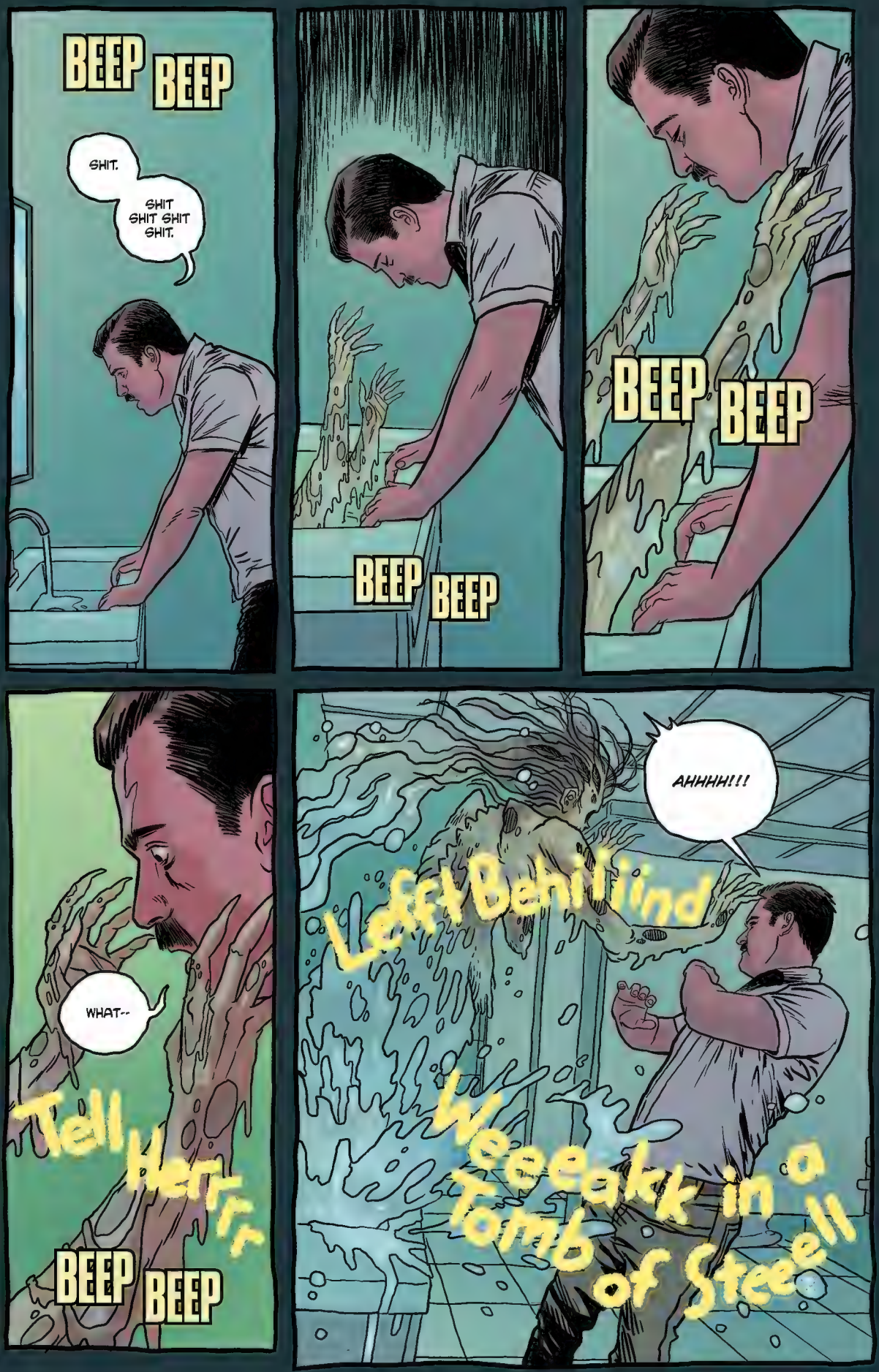
SINCE I CAME TO FARMINGTON, I'VE HAD THE PLEASURE OF GETTING TO KNOW ALL OF YOU.
SO, IT HURTS ME PERSONALLY WHEN I HAVE TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS LIKE THIS.


NOW THAT ALL FAMILY HAS BEEN NOTIFIED...
...I'M READY TO REVEAL THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS OPENED UP AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF MACKENZIE CHENG, AGE 16, OF FARMINGTON.
WE'LL BE TREATING IT AS A HOMICIDE.
THAT'S ALL THE INFO WE'RE GOING TO RELEASE RIGHT NOW BUT I'LL OPEN UP FOR QUESTIONS.

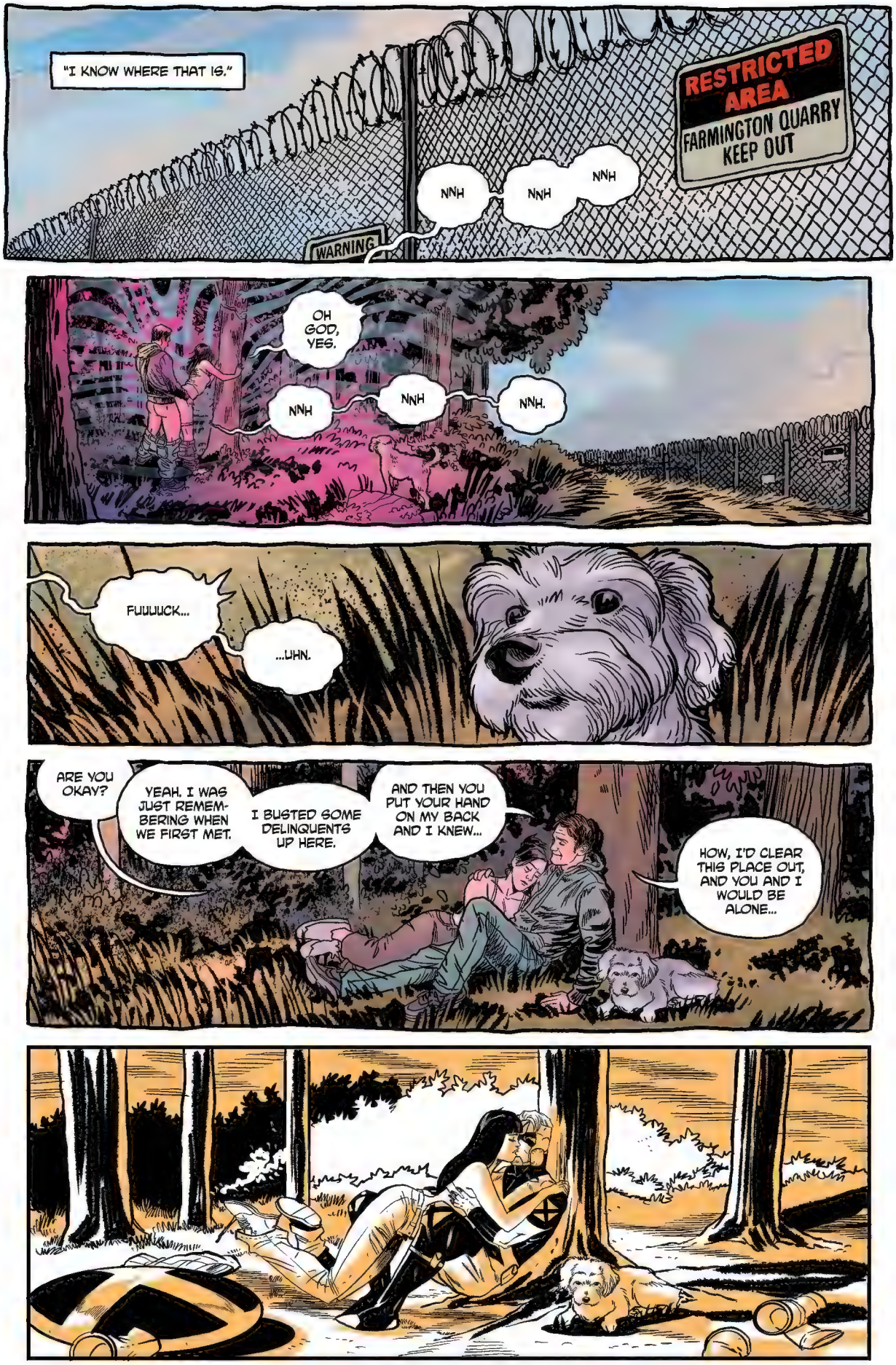

Farmington
WILL FARMINGTON'S "LOCAL MAN" BE WORKING ON THE CASE IN ANY CAPACITY?
RM
IS FORMER FARMINGTON SUPERHERO CROSSJACK INVOLVED WITH THE CASE?
DOES THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE HODAG MURDER?

NO, MY DEPARTMENT HAS NOT ASKED UH...
"LOCAL MAN" TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS INVESTIGATION IN ANY OFFICIAL CAPACITY.
OH... WELL THEN CAN YOU CLEAR THIS UP?

I TALKED TO MR. GREG SHRUDER, AKA, "COOCHIE POO" THIS MORNING.
HE SAID XAVER HAS BEEN TO THE SITE OF THE STAR TRIBE CAMP...
INQUIRING ABOUT YOU.
WHAT? COME ON...
THOSE PEOPLE ARE NOTORIOUSLY ANTI-LAW ENFORCEMENT...
LOCAL MAN WAS ALSO SEEN THIS MORNING AT CITY HALL.
WHAT'S HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH LOCAL POLITICS?
IS IT TRUE THAT MACKENZIE WAS PART OF YOUR WIFE'S FUTURE FORUM?
AFTER THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE DESOLATORS AND THE "DELIVERANCE" KILLER...
BEEP BEEP
...DO YOU THINK LOCAL MAN HAS LOST FAITH IN YOU AND THE DEPARTMENT?
BEEP BEEP
I'M SORRY. I HAVE TO TAKE THIS.
WILL YOU REACH OUT TO OTHER HEROES FOR ASSISTANCE IN THIS CASE?
HAVE YOU CONTACTED THE FREAK FORCE?
I HAVE TO TAKE THIS!
BEEP BEEP


BEEP BEEP
SHIT.
SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT.
BEEP BEEP
BEEP BEEP
WHAT--
Tell Herrr.
BEEP BEEP
AHHHH!!!
Left Behind
Weeeakk in a Tomb of Steell

I will haave My Earthen sssseea of Power
and my Juuuussssstiiiceee
SPLOOSH
BEEP BEEP-KLK
BRIAN? HEY, IT'S MADDIE OVER AT THE M.E.'S OFFICE.
HUFF
HUFF
I GOT THE LAB RESULTS BACK ON THE WATER FOUND IN MS. CHENG'S LUNGS.
THERE'S A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF IRON CONSISTENT WITH GROUND WATER ALL AROUND THE RIVER VALLEY.
AND THEN, WELL...
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. A BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL...BUT...
...BUT I'LL BE HONEST, IT'S NOT MADE UP OF ANY PROTEINS I'VE EVER SEEN.
HUFF... SEA...
I MEAN, YOU COULD TELL ME IT WAS FAIRY DUST AND I'D BELIEVE YOU.
...EARTHEN SEA OF POWER.
FUCK ME...


"I KNOW WHERE THAT IS."
RESTRICTED AREA
FARMINGTON QUARRY
KEEP OUT
NNH
NNH
NNH
WARNING
OH GOD, YES.
NNH
NNH
NNH.
FUUUUCK...
...UHN.
ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH. I WAS JUST REMEMBERING WHEN WE FIRST MET.
I BUSTED SOME DELINQUENTS UP HERE.
AND THEN YOU PUT YOUR HAND ON MY BACK AND I KNEW...
HOW, I'D CLEAR THIS PLACE OUT, AND YOU AND I WOULD BE ALONE...

ALL THAT NOSTALGIA.
I JUST *FEEL GOOD*, INGA.
SO GOOD. I'VE FIGURED SOME THINGS OUT.
IS THAT WHY YOU WERE SO... INTENSE?
BIG THINGS. SECRET THINGS.

LIKE... WHAT, JACK?

WHEN I LEFT FARMINGTON, THERE WERE A LOT OF THINGS LEFT UNRESOLVED.
FEELINGS. PLANS.

I KNOW ME NOT BEING HERE MEANT YOU HAD TO FIND OTHER THINGS.
OTHER PEOPLE.

BUT, I'M CLOSE NOW, INGA. SOON, I CAN MAKE IT RIGHT.
I CAN GET JUSTICE...
NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS.
JACK. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS.
PLEASE...
JACK?
I...
I HAVE TO GO.
I'M GOING TO SAVE FARMINGTON.
MYSELF.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP

OFFICER KOPECKI.
YOU DOING OK?
SHUT UP AND LISTEN.
I GOT THAT PROPERTY QUERY BACK.
THAT STORAGE SHED IS REGISTERED TO AN ANONYMOUS LLC.
VERY LITTLE INFORMATION.
BUT I GOT THE OWNER OF THE LLC'S ADDRESS.
CAN YOU TEXT IT TO ME?
WHAT... TEXT?
I DON'T HAVE YOUR NUMBER IN MY--
JUST TELL ME THE ADDRESS.
Google
1609 West J st
IT'S 1609 WEST J STREET IN FARMINGTON.
WAIT... I KNOW THIS HOUSE.
YOU'RE SURE THIS IS THE RIGHT ADDRESS?
1609 WEST J STREET?
THAT'S MY HOUSE.

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?
BRIAN...

DOES INGA KNOW?
THAT MACKENZIE IS DEAD?
YEAH. SHE KNOWS. WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

NO, DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT THE WAREHOUSE OUT PAST TOWN?
DOES SHE KNOW ABOUT THE DEAD SUPERHEROES INSIDE?

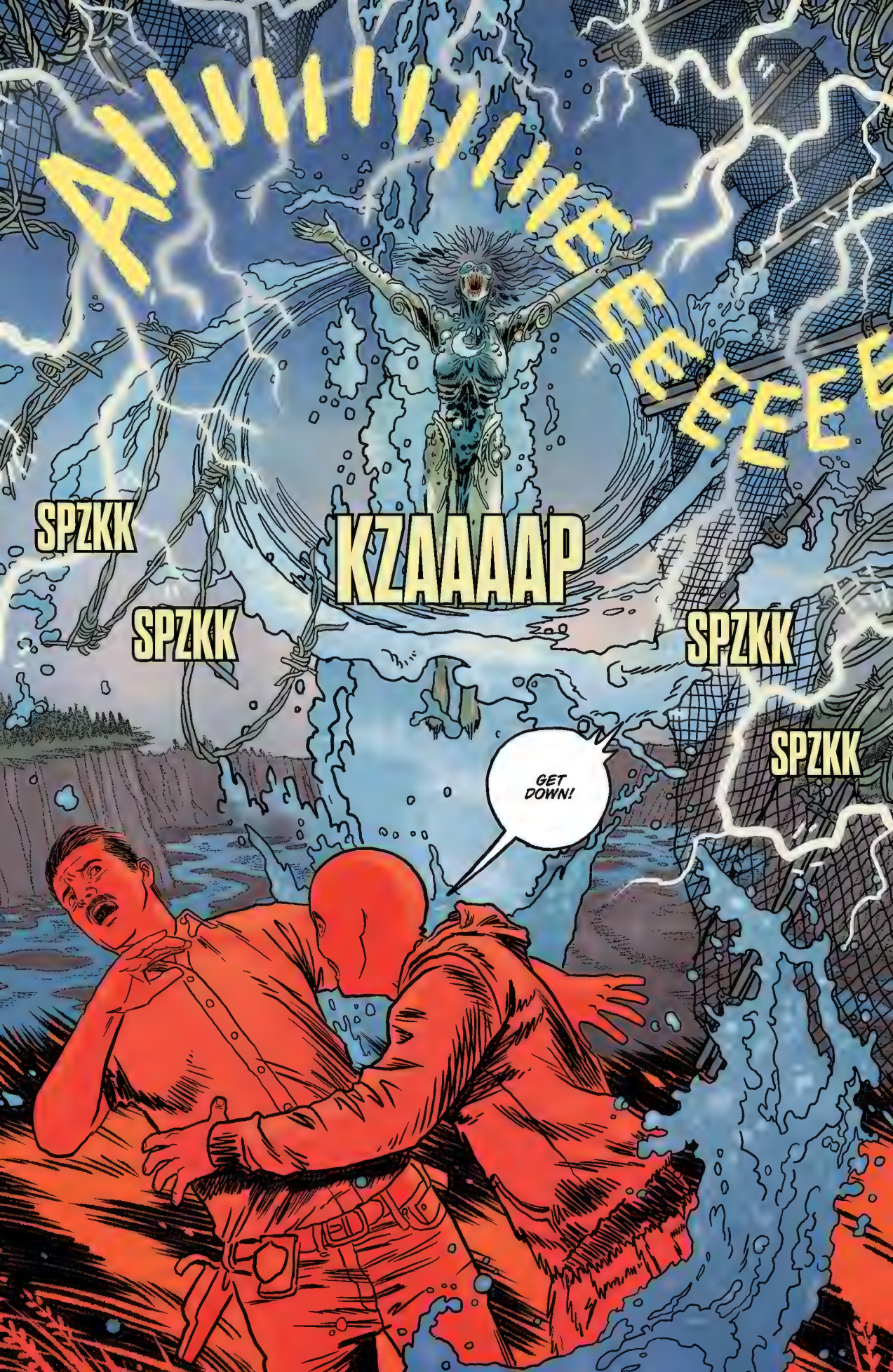
JESUS, MAN. YOU'RE HIGH AS FUCK.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THIS WHOLE TIME, YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING ME BUSY...
...SENDING ME AFTER HIPPIES, WILD GOOSE CHASES!

MEANWHILE, THE WHOLE TIME YOU WERE DRAINING *4TH GEN* DRY FOR THEIR BLOOD OR THEIR....
DID YOU KILL MACKENZIE FOR HER BLOOD TOO?
WHAT THE...

I WAS TRYING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE, MAN.
I WANTED TO BELIEVE YOU COULD CHANGE.
BUT YOU'RE AS FUCKED UP AS I ALWAYS THOUGHT YOU WERE.
AND NOW YOU'RE ON GODDAMN DRUGS!?

PEPPER?
THE HELL--?
RRRF
RRRF
RRF!

RMMMMMMMBBBBLLLLL
JACK...


AIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEE
SPZKK
KZAAAAP
SPZKK
SPZKK
SPZKK
GET DOWN!

EEEEEEEEEE!!!
HOLY SHIT.
THAT!
WHATEVER THE HELL THAT IS KILLED MACKENZIE CHENG!
IT'S BEEN TRAVELING AROUND VIA PIPES AND STREAMS UNDERGROUND SOMEHOW...
...GETTING STRONGER AND HELL BENT ON GETTING "REVENGE" FOR SOME GODDAMN THING!
SEASCAPE.
NO. IT HAS TO BE YOU.
IT HAS TO BE.
IT HAS TO BE?
UNTIL YOU CAME HERE, I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS SUPERHERO SHIT!
I MEAN, LOOK, YOU FUCKING IDIOT...
DO YOU THINK I COULD DO THAT?!
NO. IT HAS TO BE YOU.

MY POWERS...
THEY...
I...
THEY TELL ME WHAT'S TRUE.
I'M THE...
1609 WEST J...
I CAN'T BE HERE. I HAVE TO...
CRASH
WOOOOAH!
THE CAN'T MISS KID.
TO BE CONTINUED

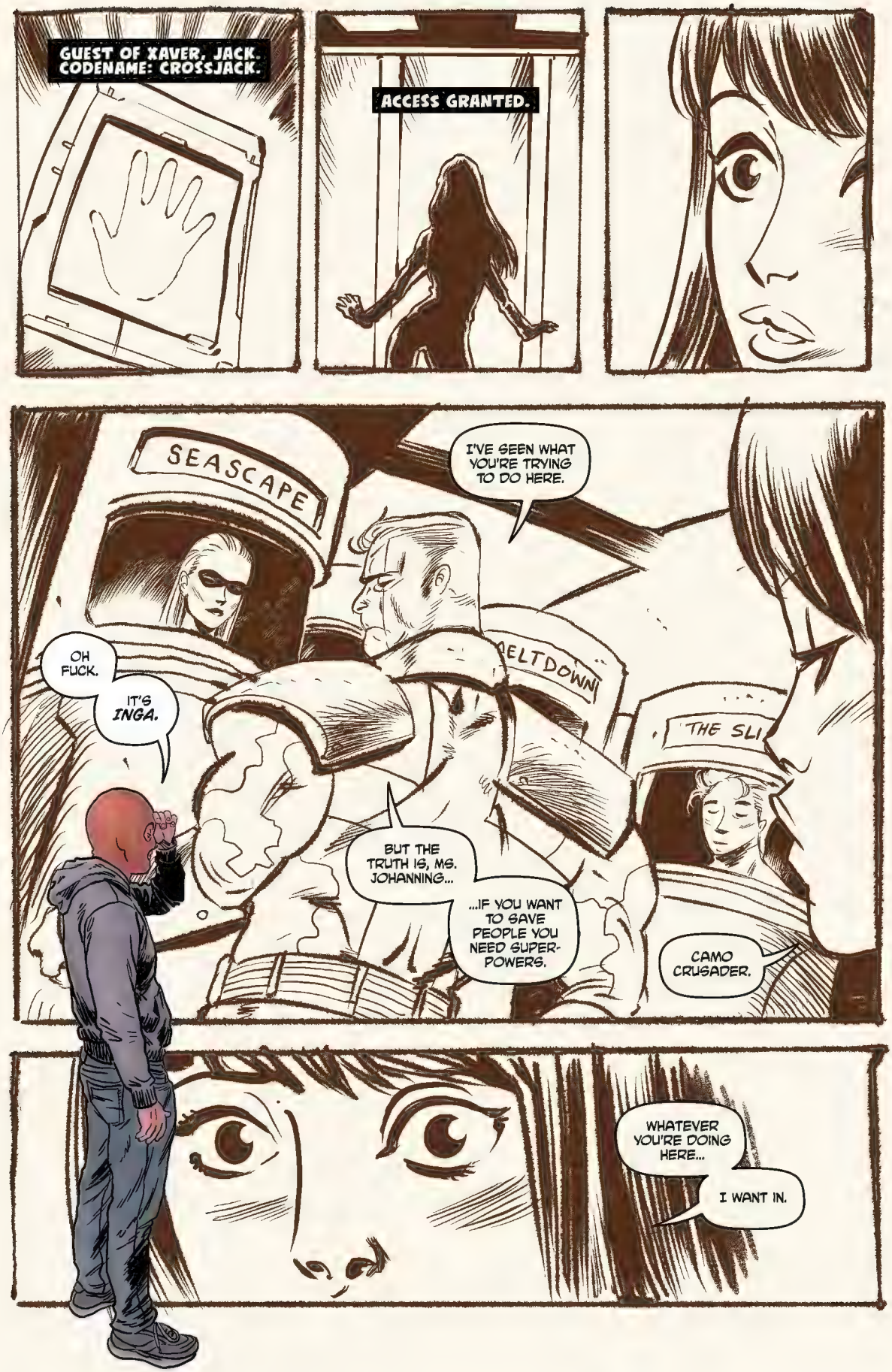
IT HAS TO BE HIM. 1609 WEST J.
HE DELIBERATELY SENT ME IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION OF THAT STORAGE SPACE.
WAIT. MY POWER TELLS ME WHAT'S TRUE.
I HEARD A VOICE (THAT VOICE!)
MACKENZIE HEARD A SONG...
AND THEN WE HEARD THE VOICE!
THAT SCREAM...
IT HAS TO BE BRIAN. HE'S CROOKED.
CROOKED COP.
HE BROUGHT ME IN CLOSE TO KEEP ME IN THE...
BUT THEN...
WHY EVEN TELL ME ABOUT MACKENZIE AT ALL?
IT HAS TO BE...
SO YOU TELL THAT, INIGAR
THIRD
Image
8 DEC
$3.99 USA
HUMETOWN

Jack used to call me "Auntie."
He said it was because I reminded him of his mom's aunt, Patty, who used to do everything for everyone else while she suffered.
It wasn't a compliment.
Still, I thought he'd come back for me.
CAN'T MISS KID...
But being with the others, doing whatever it was they do while being sexy and superpowered, and being rewarded with fame and adoration...well...
Jack didn't come back for Patty's funeral either.

When I first met "Crossjack," he was fighting drug dealers at the quarry, using his "can't miss" powers to bust up illegal parties.
AUNTIE INGA'S
LOW CARB LOW CAL BREAD
I told him he could think bigger. Real threats other than bored, horny kids.
SHUNK
He could fight villains and criminals and politicians and racists.
He could save Farmington.
COME FORUM FOR THE FUTURE!
1609 WEST J STREET IS THE OWNER OF THAT STORAGE SPACE.
And then he was gone, and I was left to do it by myself, with good food and a strong community instead of muscles and a shield.

DING
HEY INGA, I BRUNG YA SOME RHUBARB PRESERVES FROM THE BASEMENT.
I FIGURE IF ANYBODY CAN FIND A GOOD USE FOR 'EM IT'S YOU.
OH WOW, THAT'S GREAT, BEN.
THAT'LL PAIR PERFECTLY WITH THE NEW WHOLE GRAIN BAGEL. LET ME PAY YOU.
THERE'S MONEY IN THE REGISTER...
There's no money in the register.
4TH GEN. SEASCAPE...
NO, NO, NOW, DON'T YOU DO THAT. I DON'T WANT IT.
IT'S JUST GOOD TO BE PART OF SOMETHING. HAVE A GOOD 'UN, INGA.
040497
Ben Xaver thought Jack would come back for him too.

Before he left, Crossjack was part of the 4th Gen Training Program, which brought this building to Farmington.
Farmington paid for it. Now it's ours.
FORUM FOR THE TURE!
No superheroes to save us, we have to save ourselves.
Tomorrow today!
our town!
our ideas!
our time!
But how do you save a town that doesn't want to be saved?
Hello Farmington!
IF IT'S NOT HIM...
HRNF!
WAK

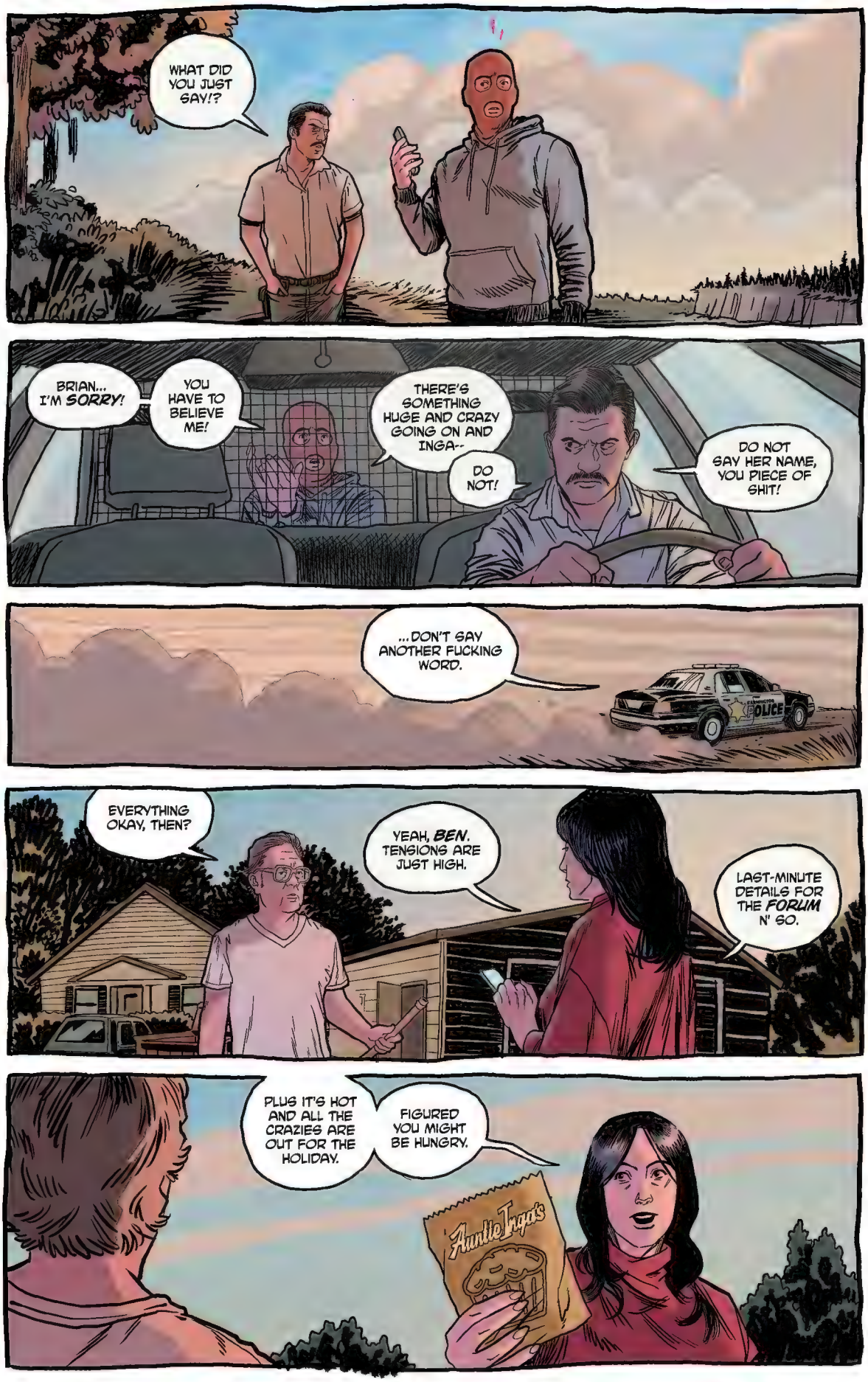

GUEST OF XAVER, JACK.
CODENAME: CROSSJACK.
ACCESS GRANTED.
SEASCAPE
I'VE SEEN WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO HERE.
OH FUCK.
IT'S INGA.
BUT THE TRUTH IS, MS. JOHANNING...
...IF YOU WANT TO SAVE PEOPLE YOU NEED SUPER-POWERS.
CAMO CRUSADER.
WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING HERE...
I WANT IN.

Chapter 9

THEN.
ARE YOU SURE, MACKENZIE?
CRAIG... JUST GO.
behiiiiiind left behind
I HEAR YOU.
I'M COMING.
We Know Yooooo
I'M HERE.
We seeee
SPPLSH
HHK-GUK

WAIIIT! NO...
NO NO NO NO!
NO...We don't know you.
Just a child. We don't...
SHE will suffer. We...
We will have justice.

NOW.
I KNOW WHAT YOU DID!
DO YOU HEAR ME?
MY EYES ARE WIDE OPEN.
I KNOW. ALL OF IT: THE FOURTH GEN KIDS, THE WAREHOUSE...
IT'S ALWAYS BEEN YOU!
YOUR BUSINESS, YOUR SUCCESS, THE "FUTURE FORUM."
ALL BULLSHIT! HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO FARMINGTON?!
JACK, I DON'T HAVE TIME.
YOU DON'T HAVE...
HOW COULD YOU...
YOU USED ME!
BEEP
YOU LIED TO ME!
WAS ANY OF IT REAL?!
WAS ALL OF THIS JUST TO KEEP ME IN THE DARK?
IS THAT WHY YOU FUCKED ME? HELLO?
HELLO!? INGA!?


WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY!?
BRIAN... I'M SORRY!
YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME!
THERE'S SOMETHING HUGE AND CRAZY GOING ON AND INGA--
DO NOT!
DO NOT SAY HER NAME, YOU PIECE OF SHIT!
...DON'T SAY ANOTHER FUCKING WORD.
POLICE
EVERYTHING OKAY, THEN?
YEAH, BEN. TENSIONS ARE JUST HIGH.
LAST-MINUTE DETAILS FOR THE FORUM N' SO.
PLUS IT'S HOT AND ALL THE CRAZIES ARE OUT FOR THE HOLIDAY.
FIGURED YOU MIGHT BE HUNGRY.
Auntie Inga's

SHREEE
POK
LOOK, BRIAN. I GET IT.
YOU HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE MAD.
SKREEEEEE
FARMINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
Police
JJ'S TRACTOR & TIRE
BUT WE'VE BOTH BEEN PLAYED, OKAY?
THE BAKERY, THE COMMUNITY CENTER, THE FUTURE FORUM. ALL OF IT.
INGA IS UP TO SOMETHING, AND THAT...
THAT WATER CREATURE...
ISN'T HAPPY ABOUT IT. BUT YOU HAVE TO LET ME--
THIS IS BRIAN BUCHOLZ...
I'M THE POLICE CHIEF IN FARMINGTON, WISCONSIN. I'M CALLING--
SHUT
DON'T SHUT THAT--
GODDAMMIT, YOU CAN'T JUST--
LET ME OUT OF HERE! THIS IS IMPORTANT! IT'S BIGGER THAN US.
BRIAN! YOU CAN'T JUST HOLD ME AND PEPPER WITHOUT...

IT'S NOT ILLEGAL TO SLEEP WITH SOMEONE'S WIFE.
NONE OF THIS WOULD BE...
IF YOU HADN'T SENT ME OUT TO THAT HIPPIE ENCAMPMENT, NONE OF THIS WOULD EVEN BE HAPPENING.
THEY DID SOMETHING TO ME OUT THERE...
I CAN'T...
I WAS OUT OF MY MIND.
THEY EITHER HAD POWERS OR THEY DOSED ME WITH SOMETHING OR...
BUT HERE'S THE THING. I DON'T THINK THEY MEANT TO, BUT THEY UNLOCKED...
I LEARNED SOMETHING. MY POWERS...
MY POWERS AREN'T JUST FOR THROWING WEAPONS AND SHIELDS.
THEY PUT ME ON THE PATH. WHICHEVER ONE I NEED TO GO ON, IF I JUST LISTEN TO THEM.
THE SAME TARGETING THAT CLICKS IN WHEN I'M AIMING A DART OR A...
A...
IT CLICKS IN WHEN I'M CLOSE TO FIGURING SOMETHING OUT.
IT'S LIKE I'M MAGNETICALLY DRAWN TO THE SOLUTION.

MAYBE...
MAYBE THAT'S WHY I WAS SO ATTRACTED TO INGA, AFTER I TOOK DOWN "DELIVERANCE."
MAYBE I INSTINCTIVELY KNEW IT WAS HER BEHIND...
ALL OF THIS.
SLAM!
DON'T YOU DARE!
YOU DON'T GET TO SUPERPOWER YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS SHIT.
SHE'S MY WIFE!
WE HAVE CHILDREN!
IT'S NOT MY FAULT FOR ASKING YOU TO HELP FIND OUT WHO KILLED A TEENAGER.
THAT'S PSYCHOTIC.
EVERYWHERE YOU GO, YOU FUCK UP EVERYTHING!
THIRD GEN. HODAG. FRIGHTSIDE. CAMO CRUSADER. YOU GOT ME FUCKING STABBED!
NONE OF THIS SHIT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE NOT HERE. YOU'RE LIKE CANCER.
YOU'RE NOT MAGNETICALLY DRAWN TO ANYTHING, YOU IDIOT! IT'S JUST...
...EVERYTHING YOU GET CLOSE TO DIES.
BRIAN... I'M SORRY, I REALLY AM.
I'M TRYING TO BE A BETTER PERSON.
AND I KNOW I FUCKED UP HUGE HERE...
BUT YOU'RE WRONG...

POK!
GUKK
CLING
JINGLE
JINGLE
"...I DO GET TO SUPERPOWER MY WAY OUT OF THIS."
Police
Black Beauty
YEAH YEAH, I KNOW.
"FUCK CROSS-JACK."
NORMALLY I'D AGREE WITH YOU.
BUT THE INSURANCE FROM YOUR LAST DRVR RIDE* ENDED UP BUYIN' ME ALL 375 HORSES OF BLACK BEAUTY HERE, SO I'M FEELIN' GENEROUS.
4THECOMMUNITY CENTER, RIGHT?
*SEE LOCAL MAN: GOLD!
AHEM
SAYS HERE YOU CHECKED "HAVE CONVERSATION."
SO...

I JUST CAN'T GET OVER IT. I'VE GOT THE *HOW*.
THE PATH.
BUT THE WHY... I CAN'T FIGURE THE *WHY*.
I GUESS IT HAS TO BE MONEY, RIGHT?
I MEAN, THIS IS AMERICA. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT THE MONEY.
BUT TO PLAN SOMETHING FOR LIKE TWENTY YEARS AND BUILD A WHOLE LIFE TO COVER IT UP...
SHE HAS A HUSBAND. SHE HAS KIDS. SHE'S LIKE...
THE MOST BELOVED PERSON IN TOWN. MY DAD LOVES HER, AND HE HATES EVERYONE.
AND THEN THE CONSEQUENCES. MY GOD.
THE THING WITH *4TH GEN* WAS, THEY JUST WANTED TO KNOW IF YOU HAD SUPERPOWERS.
THEY NEVER EVEN ASKED *WHAT* YOU WERE.
SEASCAPE WAS GOOD-LOOKING AND COULD CONTROL WATER, SO, GOOD ENOUGH, THEY FIGURED.
BUT NOW, SHE GOT OUT OF HER RE-GEN BED, AND SHE TURNED INTO THAT CREEPY OLD HAG. AND...
AND SHE KILLED A KID, AND DROPPED HER ON HER PARENTS' FRONT PORCH.
AND NOW SHE'S RUNNING UNDER THE TOWN IN THE GROUNDWATER.
AND ALL BECAUSE... BECAUSE WHAT?
BECAUSE I LEFT INGA TO JOIN THIRD GEN? IS THIS...
DID INGA DO ALL OF THIS BECAUSE OF *ME*?

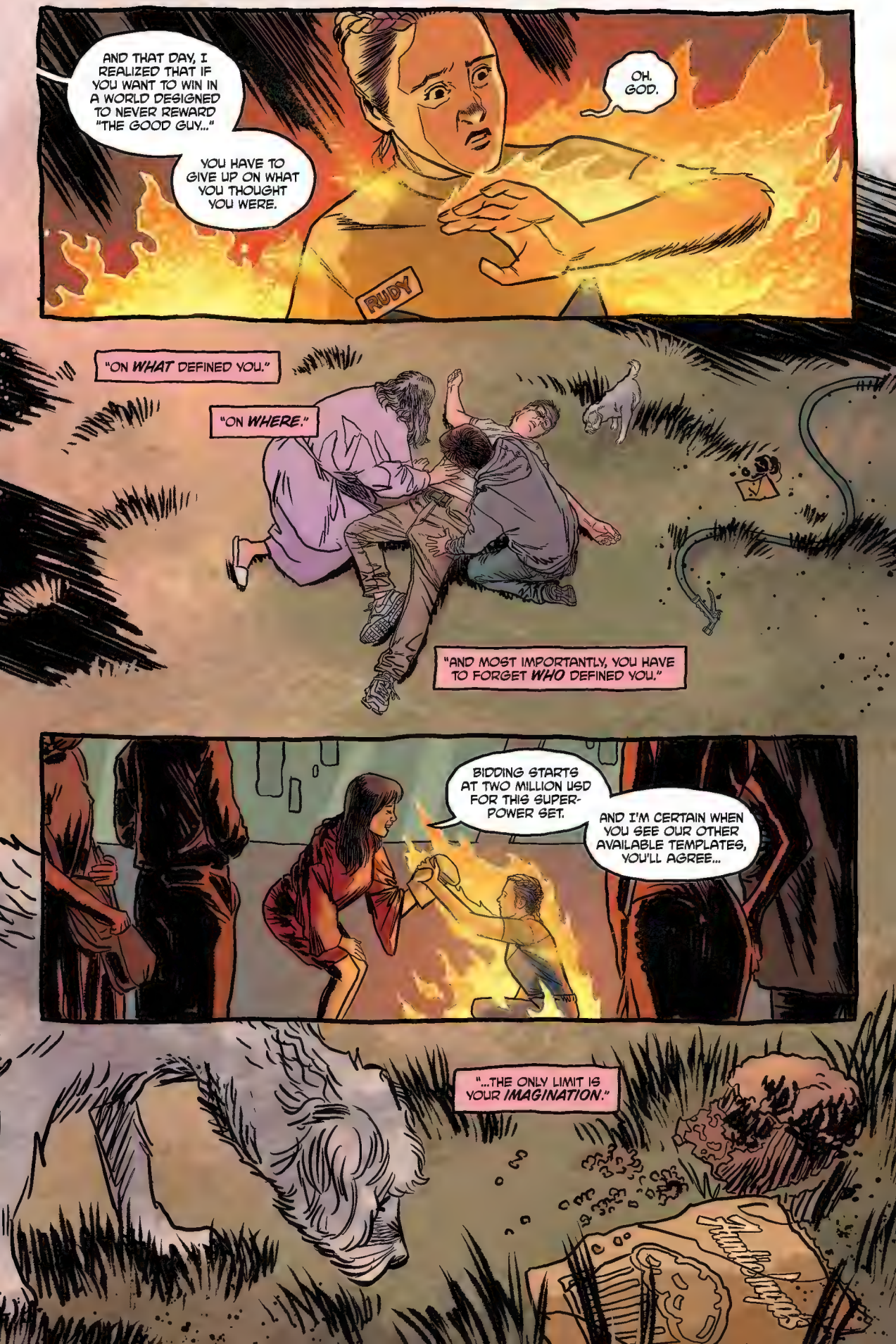
A FEY.
HUH?
WHAT YOU GOT THERE IS ONE OF THE FEY.
AKA "FAIRY," "VILA" OR MORE ACCURATELY "A WATER SPRITE."
THEY GOT POWERS OVER LAKES N' STREAMS. SOMETIMES THEY WEAR A HUMAN HOST LIKE A SKIN. USUALLY REAL NICE THOUGH.
SING LITTLE SONGS. LOVE CHILDREN.
KNOWN TO HELP 'EM BACK TO THEIR HOMES WHEN THEY GET LOST.
BUT WHEN A FEY GETS HURT OR CAPTURED, THEY GOT A VENGEFUL STREAK A MILE WIDE.
THEY'LL KILL EVERYONE THE OBJECT OF THEIR VENGEANCE LOVES, JOHN WICK STYLE. WHOLE VILLAGES EVEN.
ME N' MY BROTHER-N'-LAW BEEN PLAYIN' DUNGEONS N' DRAGONS A BUNCH.

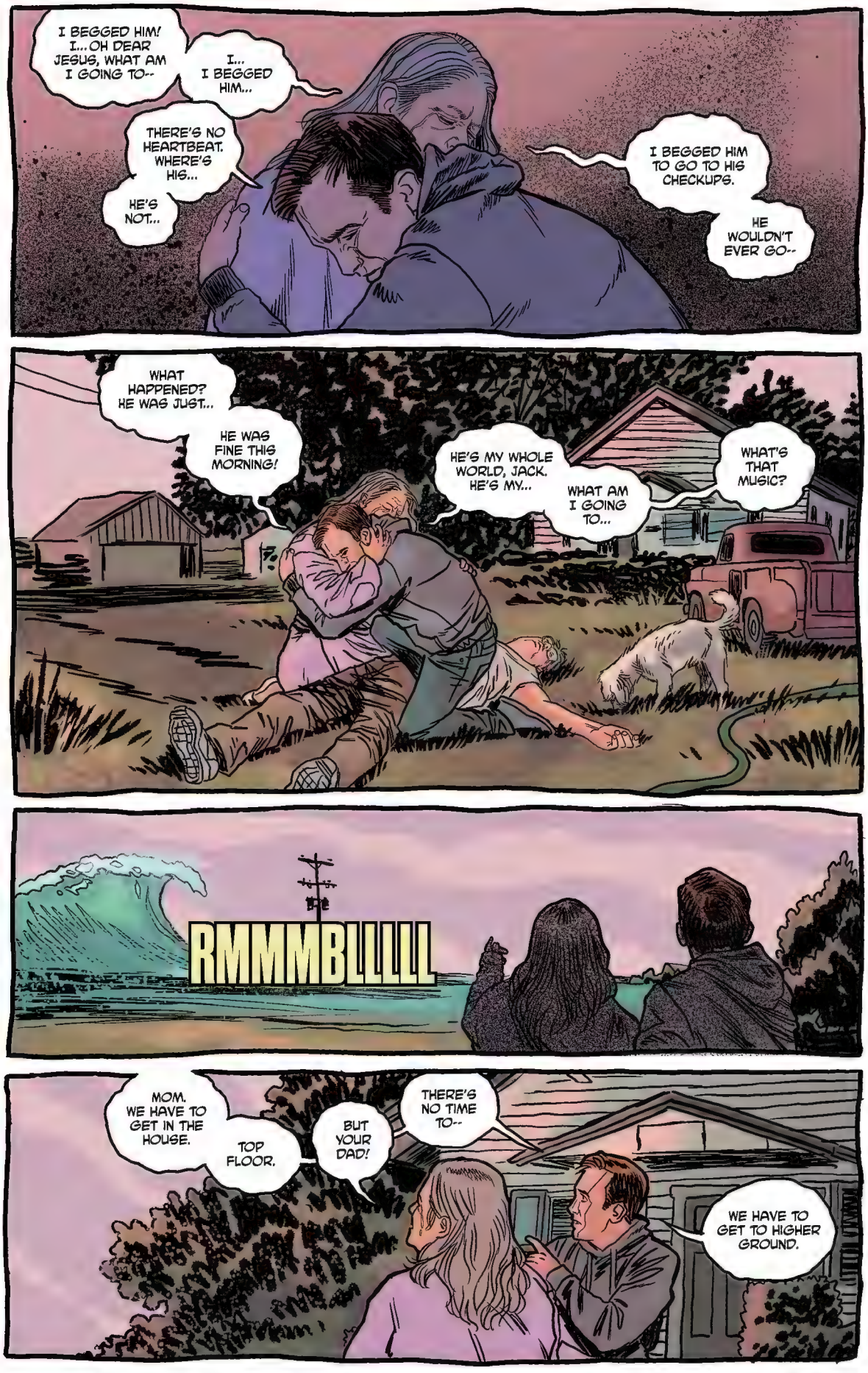
BZZZZZ
BZZZZZ--
HEY MOM. NOW'S NOT A GOOD TIME...
JACK... JUST COME HOME.
IT'S YOUR DAD.
PULL OVER.
THIS FIELD IS BY MY HOUSE.
BUT, THAT'S NOT YOUR DESTINATION--
"PULL OVER!"

AN IMPRESSIVE ATTENDANCE FOR YOUR EVENT.
ESPECIALLY FOR SUCH A SMALL AND DEPRESSED TOWN.
JULY 4-6
FARMINGTON FUTURE FORUM
JULY 4-6
YOU SHOULD BE PROUD, MRS. JOHANNING-BUCHOLZ.
WHAT, THIS?
IT'S JUST A LITTLE SOMETHING I WHIPPED UP WHILE THE KIDS WERE AT SCHOOL.
NOW, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE ALL HERE TO SEE...
...AND IT ISN'T "SUSTAINABLE DRYER BALLS."
OR TIPS ON BUILDING A BETTER CUSTOM BIKE SHOP.
RUDY?
IT'S TIME TO SHOW OFF YOUR PROMOTION.

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, INNOVATORS AND ENTREPRENEURS.
MEET THE SLICK 2.0!
RUDY
SLPPP
"THIS MORNING SHE WAS A BAKERY CASHIER."
"A FEW HOURS LATER, SHE'S A BIO-ENGINEERED SUPERHUMAN USING AUNTIE INGA'S VERY OWN PROPRIETARY TECHNOLOGY."
NOW, MAYBE YOU THINK YOU DON'T HAVE USE FOR A TEENAGER ABLE TO GENERATE A NEARLY UNLIMITED AMOUNT OF INDUSTRIAL-GRADE BIO-LUBRICANT.
FLK
RUDY
AND TO THAT, I SAY...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE INNOVATORS.
FLK

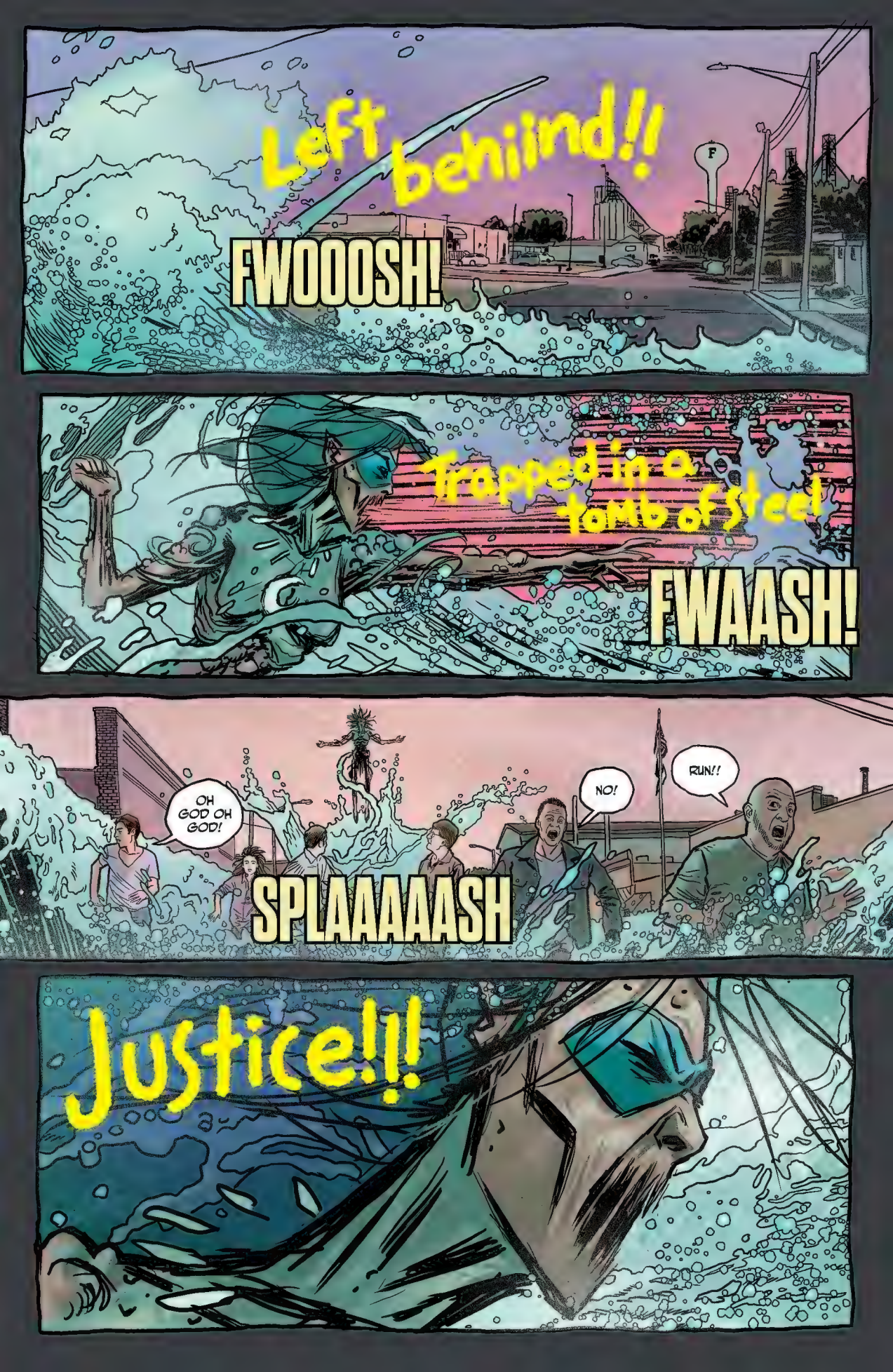
AIIIIEGGH!
FWOOMP
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
I DID EVERYTHING I COULD TO HELP THIS TOWN SURVIVE WHEN IT LOST ITS ONE CHANCE AT GREATNESS.
AIIIIEGGH!
"AND I FAILED."
HNGH
HNGH
HNGH
HNH
OH GOD
OH GOD
OH GOD
I ALMOST LAID DOWN AND DIED RIGHT THERE.
"BUT WHEN I WAS AT MY LOWEST, I WAS GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY."
DAD?
DAD!?

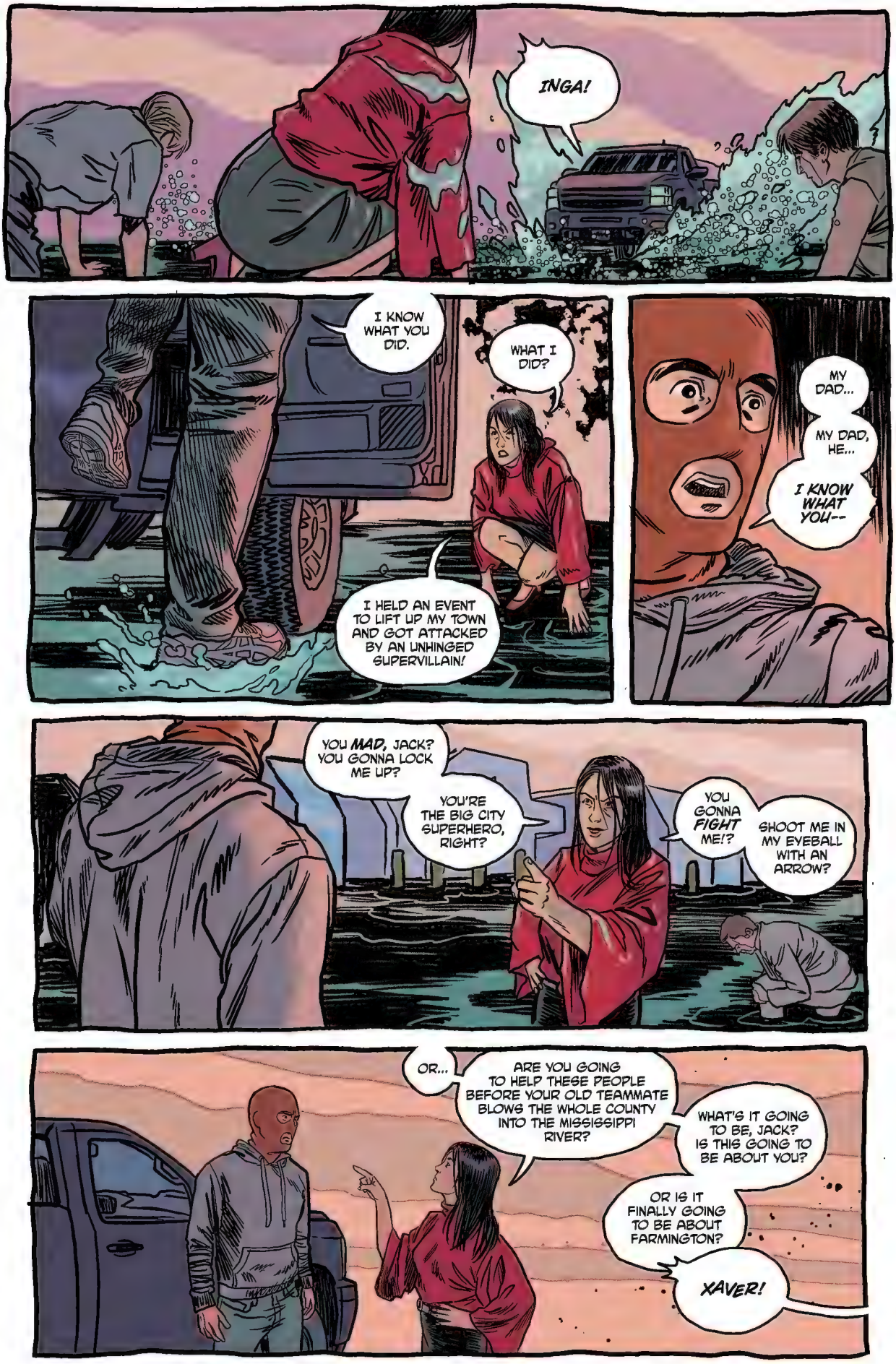

AND THAT DAY, I REALIZED THAT IF YOU WANT TO WIN IN A WORLD DESIGNED TO NEVER REWARD "THE GOOD GUY..."
YOU HAVE TO GIVE UP ON WHAT YOU THOUGHT YOU WERE.
OH. GOD.
RUDY
"ON *WHAT* DEFINED YOU."
"ON *WHERE*."
"AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, YOU HAVE TO FORGET *WHO* DEFINED YOU."
BIDDING STARTS AT TWO MILLION USD FOR THIS SUPER-POWER SET.
AND I'M CERTAIN WHEN YOU SEE OUR OTHER AVAILABLE TEMPLATES, YOU'LL AGREE...
"...THE ONLY LIMIT IS YOUR *IMAGINATION*."


I BEGGED HIM! I...OH DEAR JESUS, WHAT AM I GOING TO--
I... I BEGGED HIM...
THERE'S NO HEARTBEAT. WHERE'S HIS...
HE'S NOT...
I BEGGED HIM TO GO TO HIS CHECKUPS.
HE WOULDN'T EVER GO--
WHAT HAPPENED? HE WAS JUST...
HE WAS FINE THIS MORNING!
HE'S MY WHOLE WORLD, JACK. HE'S MY...
WHAT AM I GOING TO...
WHAT'S THAT MUSIC?
RMMMBLLLLL
MOM. WE HAVE TO GET IN THE HOUSE.
TOP FLOOR.
BUT YOUR DAD!
THERE'S NO TIME TO--
WE HAVE TO GET TO HIGHER GROUND.

BUT JACK, YOU CAN'T...
YOU HAVE TO...
YOU HAVE TO BE OUT THERE.
WE COME HERE HUMBLY TO PRAY...
FOR PEACE IN THE UNITED STATES.
"THOSE PEOPLE... THE PEOPLE IN TOWN NEED A SUPERHERO."
HEY... WHAT IS THAT?
CHIEF, WHAT TH' HECK HAPPENED HERE?
XAVER.
I'M GONNA...
HE TOOK MY...
DO YOU HAVE YOUR KEYS?
HE DES-TROYED MY... MY FAMILY.
HE... HE'S...
THE WHOLE TOWN IS FALLING APART AND HE...
CHIEF...
RMMMBLL
911
"...I THINK WE'VE GOT A BIGGER PROBLEM, HERE."

FUTURE FORUM
Yoooooouuuuuu...
We know... Yooooo
We brought the child back to her home...
She lay dead because of you!!
How could yooo...
YOU DON'T KNOW ME.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE STUCK IN THIS GODDAMN--
RUDY
Allieeeeeeeeeee...


Left behind!!
FWOOOSH!
Trapped in a tomb of steel
FWAASH!
OH GOD OH GOD!
NO!
RUN!!
SPLAAAAASH
Justice!!!


INGA!
I KNOW WHAT YOU DID.
WHAT I DID?
I HELD AN EVENT TO LIFT UP MY TOWN AND GOT ATTACKED BY AN UNHINGED SUPERVILLAIN!
MY DAD...
MY DAD, HE...
I KNOW WHAT YOU--
YOU MAD, JACK? YOU GONNA LOCK ME UP?
YOU'RE THE BIG CITY SUPERHERO, RIGHT?
YOU GONNA FIGHT ME!?
SHOOT ME IN MY EYEBALL WITH AN ARROW?
OR...
ARE YOU GOING TO HELP THESE PEOPLE BEFORE YOUR OLD TEAMMATE BLOWS THE WHOLE COUNTY INTO THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER?
WHAT'S IT GOING TO BE, JACK? IS THIS GOING TO BE ABOUT YOU?
OR IS IT FINALLY GOING TO BE ABOUT FARMINGTON?
XAVER!

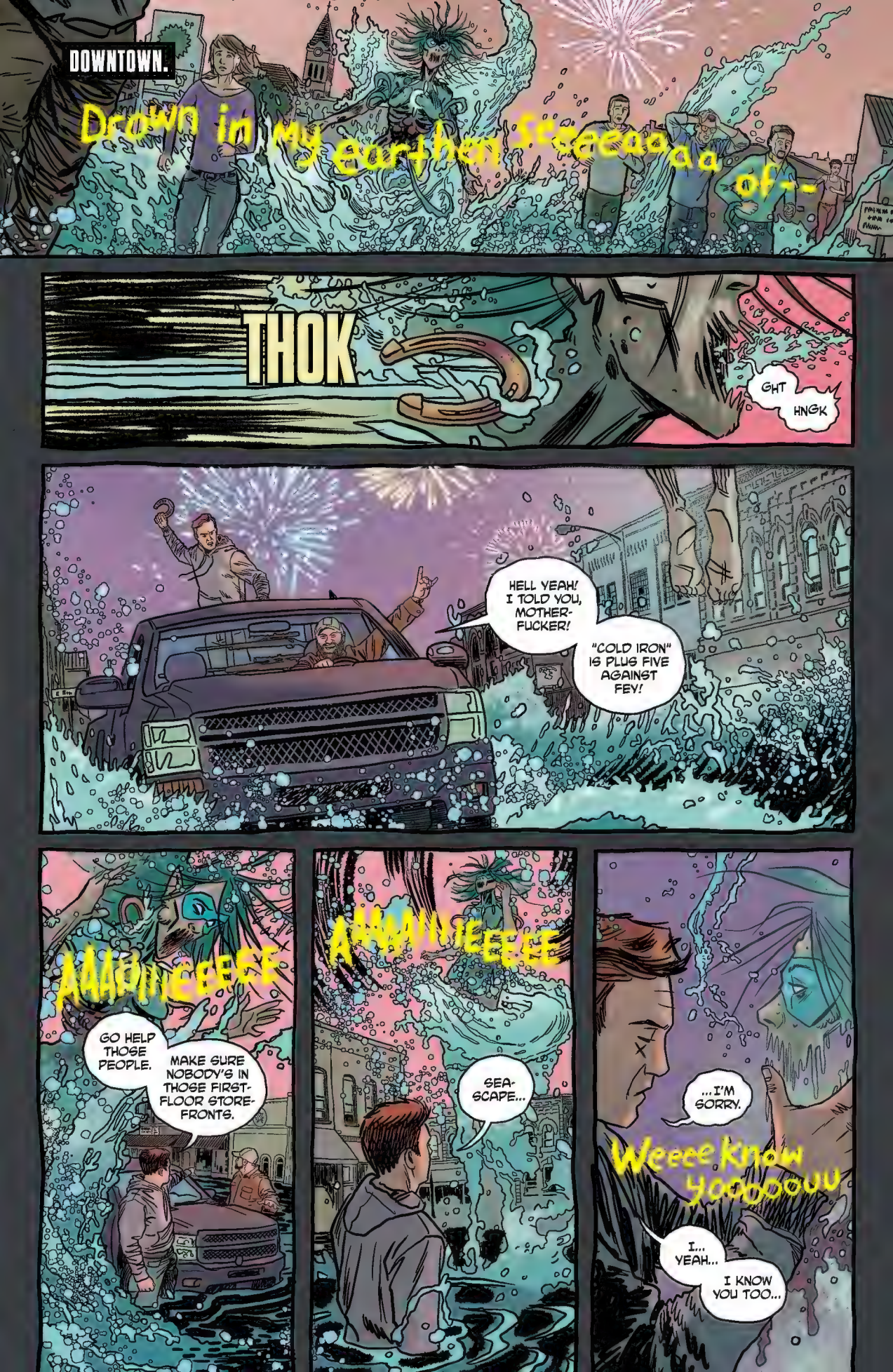
HOW DO YOU WANNA DO THIS, ASSHOLE?!

LIKE THIS, BRIAN.
YOU'RE GOING TO GET IN THAT CAR.
YOU'RE GOING TO GO GET YOUR SON AND YOUR DAUGHTER.
YOU'RE GOING TO HEAD TO HIGHER GROUND...
AND YOU'RE GOING TO LET ME DO WHAT I DO.

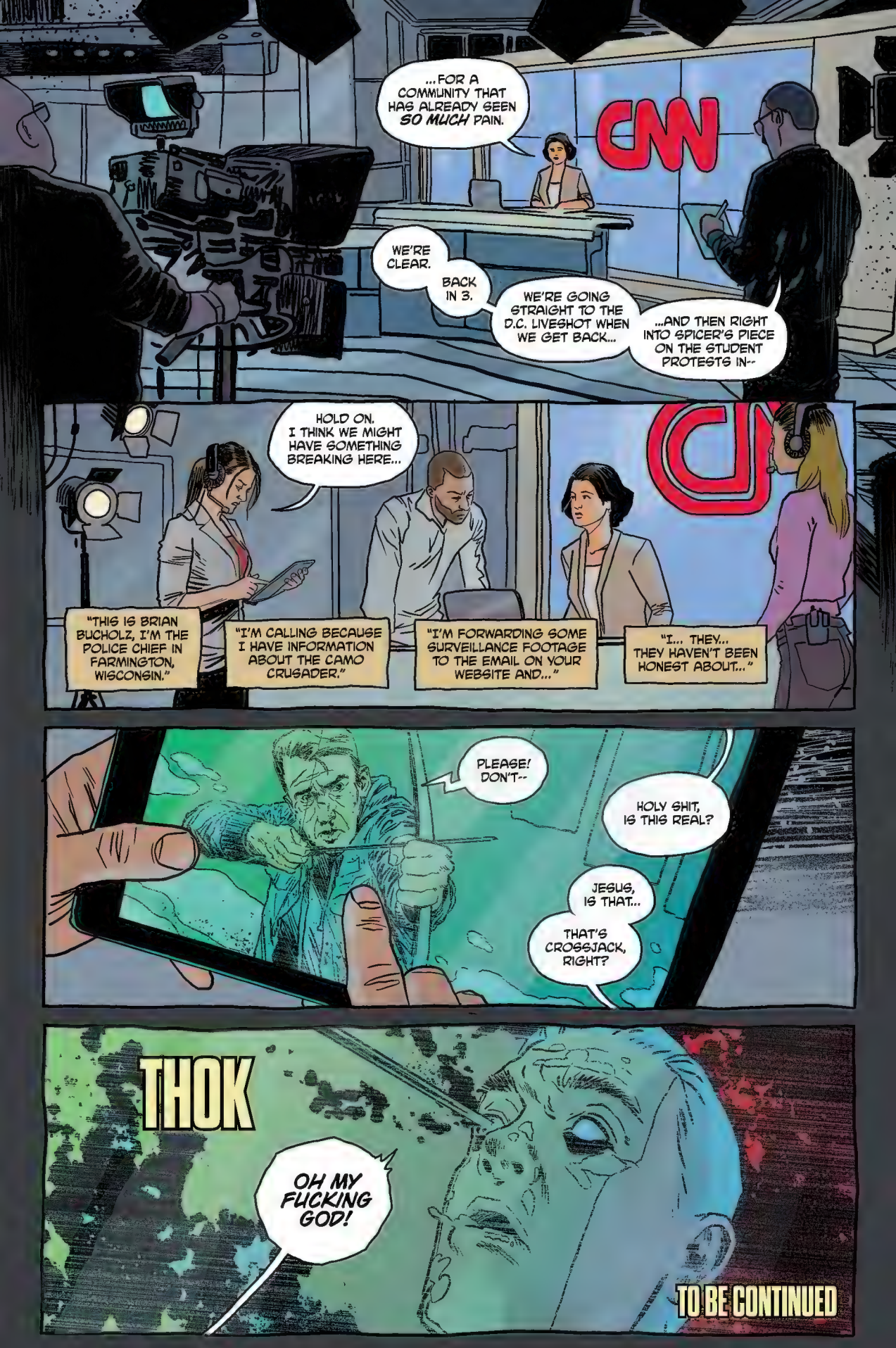
AND WHAT IF I--
HEY KID, YOU HAVE SUPERPOWERS NOW?
MR XAVER?
I... I THINK I DO?
POLICE

THEN USE THEM.
START HELPING THESE PEOPLE.

BRIAN, LET'S JUST GO GET THE KI--
DON'T FUCKING TOUCH ME.
FARMINGTON
DIEEEEEEE


DOWNTOWN.
Drown in my earthen Seaaaaaa of--
THOK
GHT
HNGK
HELL YEAH! I TOLD YOU, MOTHER-FUCKER!
"COLD IRON" IS PLUS FIVE AGAINST FEY!
AAADIEEEE
GO HELP THOSE PEOPLE.
MAKE SURE NOBODY'S IN THOSE FIRST-FLOOR STORE-FRONTS.
AHHHHIEEEE
SEA-SCAPE...
...I'M SORRY.
Weeee know yoooooou
I... YEAH...
I KNOW YOU TOO...

"WE WERE FRIENDS ONCE."
"YOU DESERVED..."
"BETTER THAN THIS..."
"YOU WERE A..."
"YOU DESERVED SO MUCH BETTER."
"A BIZARRE TRAGEDY IN A SMALL TOWN THAT'S BEEN IN THE NEWS OFTEN LATELY..."
"A TSUNAMI RIPPED THROUGH FARMINGTON, WISCONSIN LATE THIS AFTERNOON."
YES, YOU HEARD THAT RIGHT.
A TSUNAMI.
IN RURAL WISCONSIN.
THE DEATH TOLL IS UNKNOWN, BUT DAMAGE IS EXTENSIVE IN PARTS OF DOWNTOWN, AND AN EVENTS SPACE THAT WAS HOSTING A CONFERENCE AT THE TIME OF IMPACT.
AS OF YET, A CAUSE FOR THIS SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE EVENT IS UNKNOWN, BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN...
"*SOMEONE* IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS UNNATURAL CATASTROPHE."
"AND IT WILL HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES..."


...FOR A COMMUNITY THAT HAS ALREADY SEEN SO MUCH PAIN.
CNN
WE'RE CLEAR.
BACK IN 3.
WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT TO THE D.C. LIVESHOT WHEN WE GET BACK...
...AND THEN RIGHT INTO SPICER'S PIECE ON THE STUDENT PROTESTS IN--
HOLD ON. I THINK WE MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING BREAKING HERE...
"THIS IS BRIAN BUCHOLZ, I'M THE POLICE CHIEF IN FARMINGTON, WISCONSIN."
"I'M CALLING BECAUSE I HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT THE CAMO CRUSADER."
"I'M FORWARDING SOME SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE TO THE EMAIL ON YOUR WEBSITE AND..."
"I... THEY... THEY HAVEN'T BEEN HONEST ABOUT..."
PLEASE! DON'T--
HOLY SHIT, IS THIS REAL?
JESUS, IS THAT...
THAT'S CROSSJACK, RIGHT?
THOK
OH MY FUCKING GOD!
TO BE CONTINUED

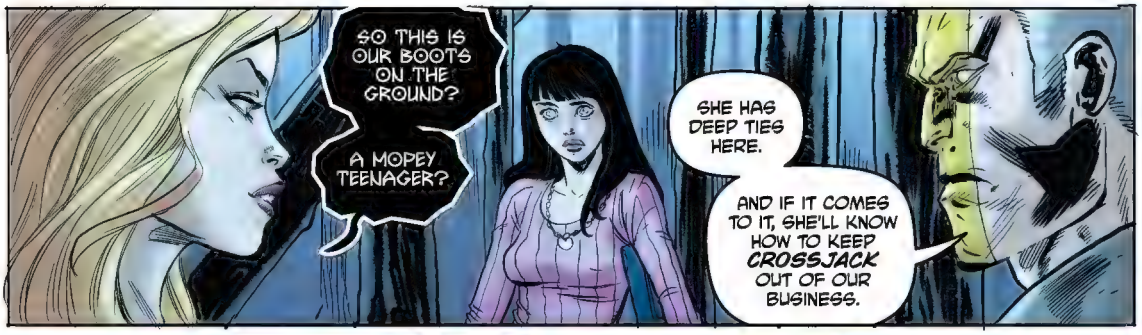
CROSSJACK
image
9
JAN
$3.99
USA
VALENTINO
after me!

I want to ask him sometimes.
If Jack is really doing as well in L.A. as he seems.
If he misses Farmington or if he prefers fighting superheroes and rescuing billionaires.
If he ever talks about his mom. His dad.
About me.
But Camo Crusader doesn't ever say much.
He's all business. Like he's above me because I'm not part of his world.
INGA...

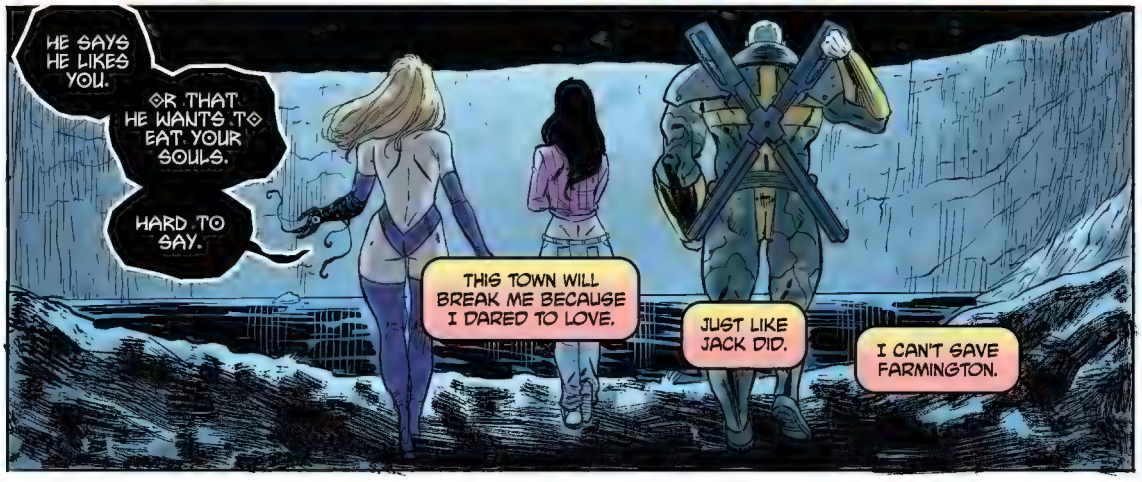
HAVE YOU EVER LOVED SOMETHING?
WHAT? OH...
YEAH.
YEAH, I HAVE.
HAVE YOU EVER LOVED SOMETHING SO MUCH YOU LET IT HURT YOU?
MORTALLY. DEEPLY.
AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...
NO.
NOT ANYMORE.
THEN YOU ARE WEAK.
AND, DESPITE MY NEED FOR YOU, YOU DO NOT HAVE MY RESPECT.
YOU HAVE MY--

DOWN!
FACELESS HORDE ASSASSINS!
PKOW
THEY'VE DISCOVERED OUR MEETING!
KILL THEM BEFORE THEY CAN REPORT BACK TO THE UNDISCLOSED!
OH, FUCK ME.
I SAID--
PWAP

KILL THEM!
BKOW
I didn't know who I was without Jack.
I didn't know where I belonged.
But in that moment...
I JOINED HIS WORLD.
YOU TOOK THE APHEX ENGINE FROM THEM.
ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY WANTED IT BACK.
SMP
FRIGHT-SIDE.
ACTUALLY, FROM HERE ON OUT, BIG GUY...
...I'M GOING TO NEED YOU TO CALL ME INVESTOR 2.
GKHEADD


SO THIS IS OUR BOOTS ON THE GROUND?
A MOPEY TEENAGER?
SHE HAS DEEP TIES HERE.
AND IF IT COMES TO IT, SHE'LL KNOW HOW TO KEEP CROSSJACK OUT OF OUR BUSINESS.

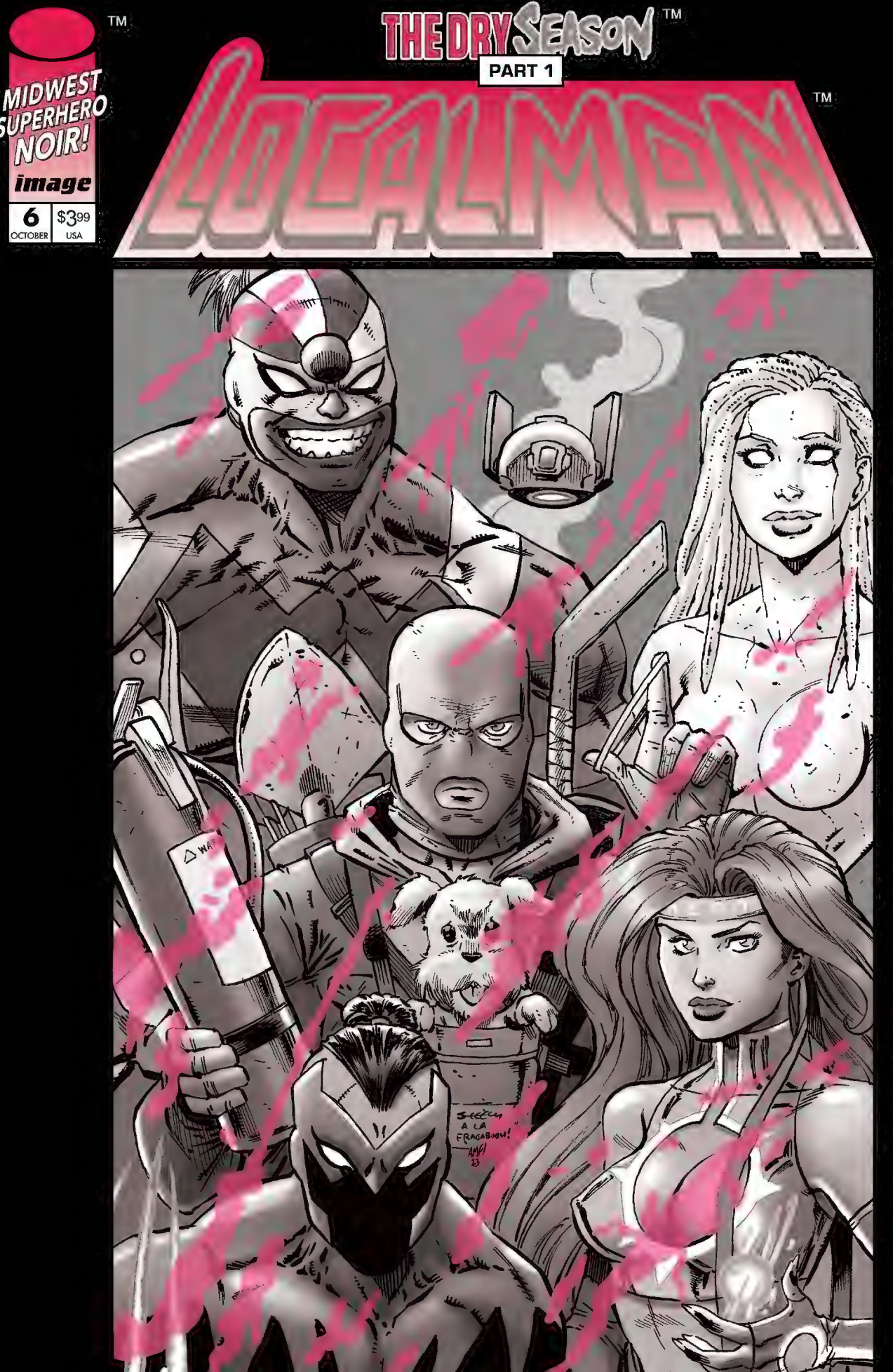
I BET.
WELL, LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD. THE FRIGHT WILL HOLLOW US OUT A LAIR.


HE SAYS HE LIKES YOU.
OR THAT HE WANTS TO EAT YOUR SOULS.
HARD TO SAY.
THIS TOWN WILL BREAK ME BECAUSE I DARED TO LOVE.
JUST LIKE JACK DID.
I CAN'T SAVE FARMINGTON.

BUT I CAN SAVE MYSELF.

Inga Johanning
IS THE
BAD
GUY

Cover Gallery


MIDWEST SUPERHERO NOIR!
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PART 1
LOCALMAN

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STRIKEFILE
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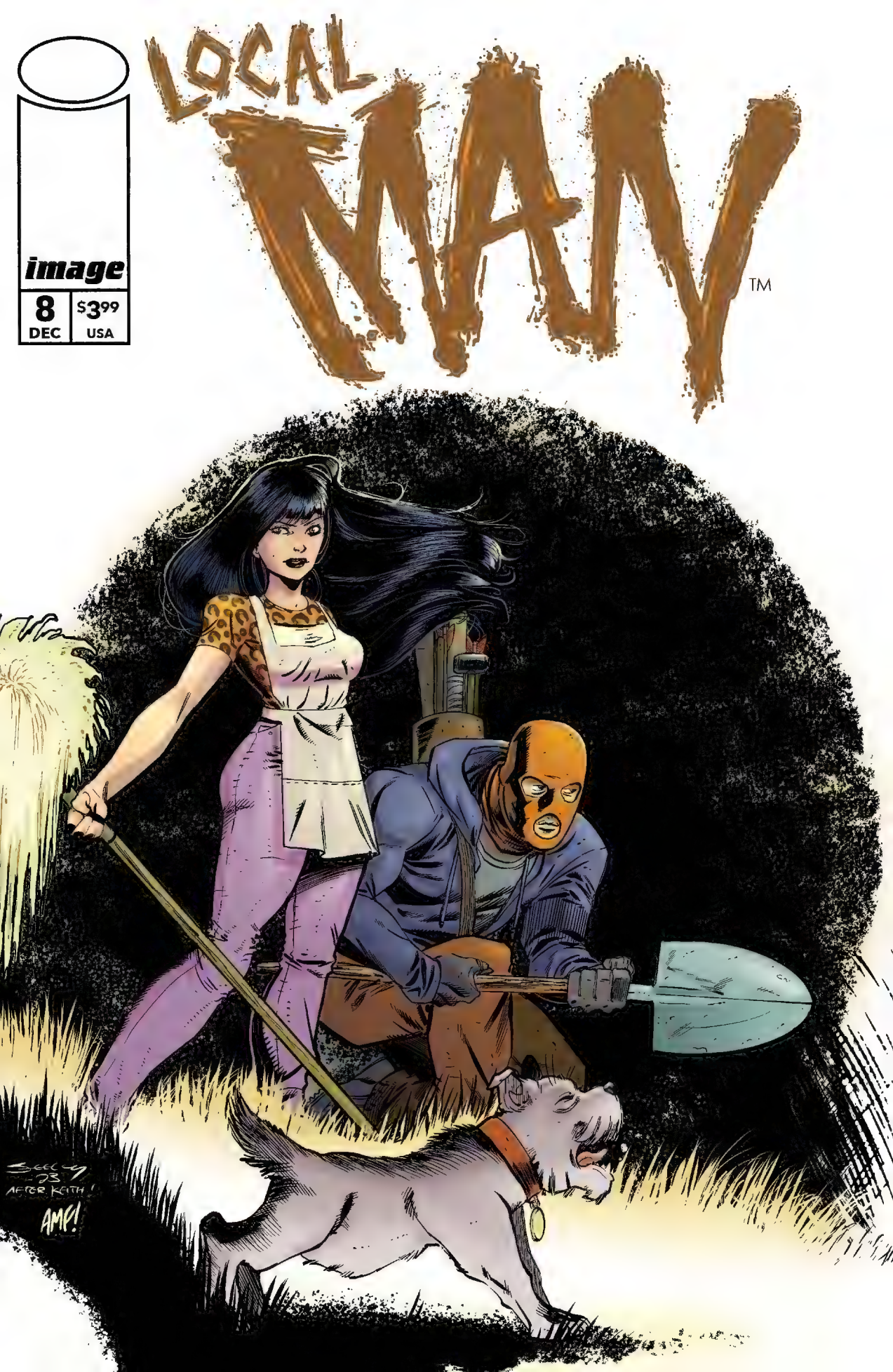
LOCAL MAN
7TH EXPLOSIVE ISSUE!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LOCAL MAN
with art by
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MEESIMO

CHRIS
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2023

22'

LOCAL MAN

STRAY DOGS CREATOR TONY FLEECS TEAMS WITH REVIVAL'S TIM SEELEY FOR A SERIES THAT COMBINES RURAL CRIME NOIR AND SUPERHERO ACTION!

JACK XAVER, FARMINGTON, WISCONSIN'S VERY OWN LOCAL MAN, IS CALLED IN TO INVESTIGATE A MYSTERIOUS DROWNING ON DRY LAND. BUT THERE'S A CONSPIRACY THEORY GAINING TRACTION THAT JACK MURDERED AMERICA'S MOST BELOVED CHAMPION, THE CAMO CRUSADER.

DIVE INTO ANOTHER TWISTED CASE WITH DARK TIES TO JACK'S SUPERHERO PAST.

ONE OF THE YEAR'S MOST CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED SERIES

"A GRIPPING, FUNNY, AND HEARTBREAKING SERIES BOTH BUILT ON THE ORIGINAL DAYS OF IMAGE BUT TAKING THE SUPERHERO GENRE TO PLACES IT'S NEVER GONE. A TRULY INSPIRING SERIES ON EVERY LEVEL, THIS IS ONE OF MY ONLY-MUST READ BOOKS ON THE STANDS."
– **GEOFF JOHNS** (JUSTICE LEAGUE, GHOST MACHINE)

"...BOTH A LAUGH RIOT AND AN EXISTENTIAL CLUSTER BOMB."
– **AIPT**

"IT'S A BOOK THAT SHOULD BE A JOKE – AND BELIEVE US, IT'S GOT PLENTY OF THOSE – BUT IT SOMEHOW MANAGES TO BE A WELL-THOUGHT-OUT SUPERHERO NOIR THAT MOVES BEYOND SIMPLE NOSTALGIA."
– **THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER**

"AN EXPERT SATIRE OF 1990S SUPERHERO COMICS, WHILE ALSO SOMEHOW BEING A LOVING TRIBUTE TO THAT ERA" – **CBR**

ISBN: 978-1-5343-9736-1
CRIME & MYSTERY | SUPERHEROES
RATED **M** | MATURE (AGES 18+)
COLLECTS **LOCAL MAN** #6-9 AND GOLD

DR. VINK

WITH A VA-VA-VA

A Dr. Vink Fancy HD Rip

~ Rippin Poorly Since May 2022 ~

Editor's Note:

This Fancy HD Rip won't trigger anyone's phobia of SCARY AI

Worry NOT! Those FRIGHTENING COMPUTERS left these images UNTOUCHED

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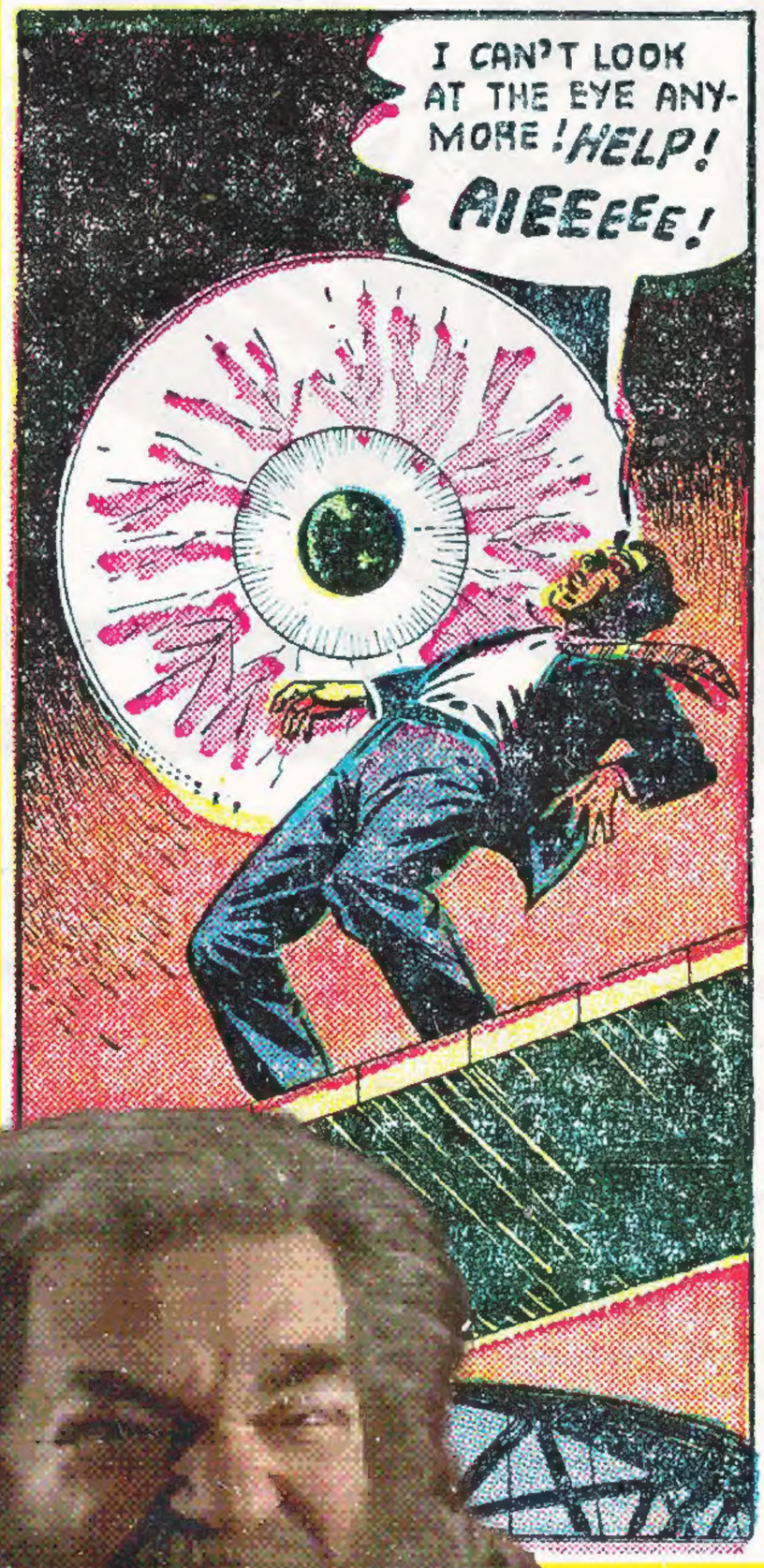

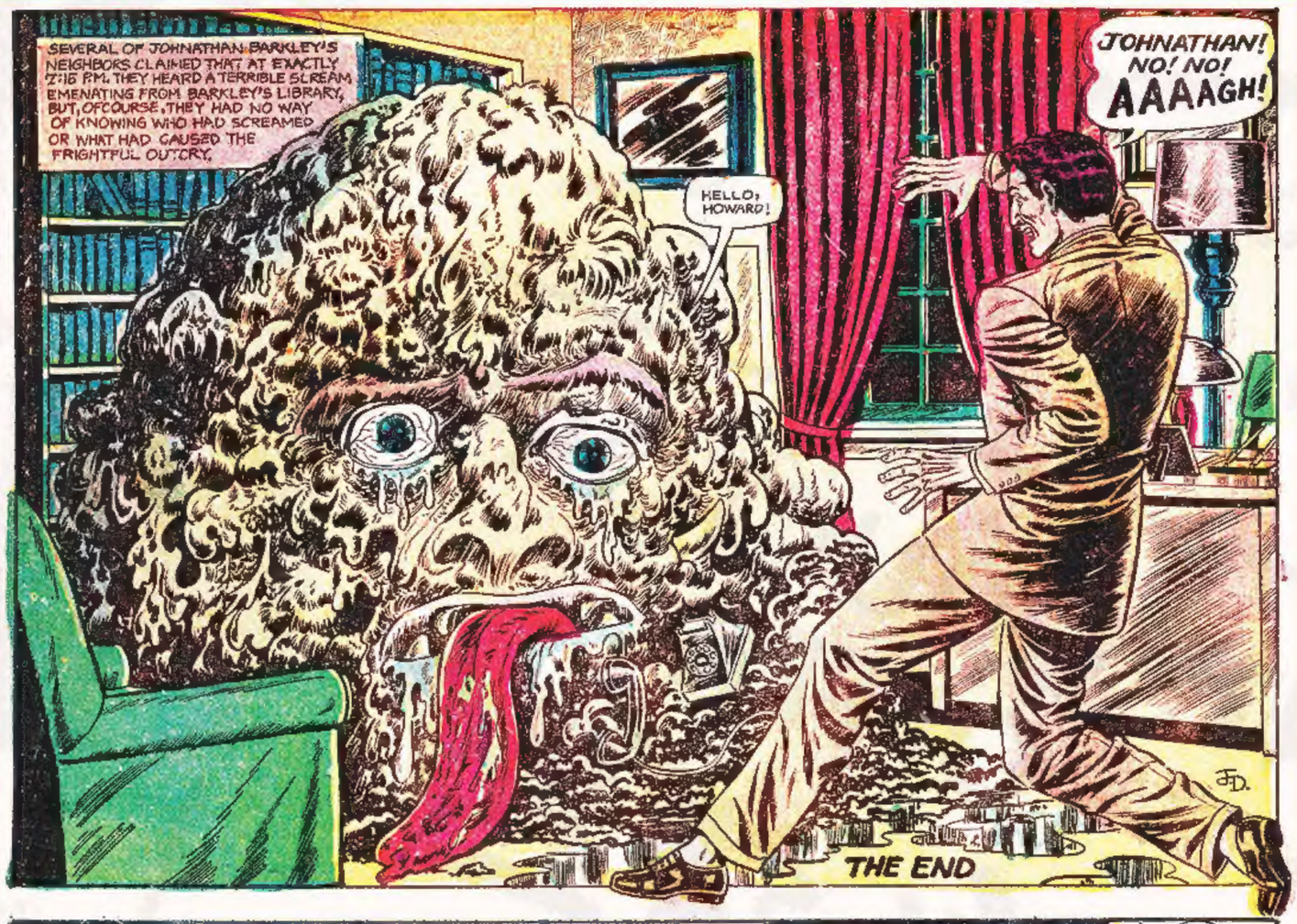
SEVERAL OF JOHNATHAN BARKLEY'S NEIGHBORS CLAIMED THAT AT EXACTLY 7:16 P.M. THEY HEARD A TERRIBLE SCREAM EMENATING FROM BARKLEY'S LIBRARY, BUT, OFCOURSE, THEY HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING WHO HAD SCREAMED OR WHAT HAD CAUSED THE FRIGHTFUL OUTCRY.
HELLO, HOWARD!
JOHNATHAN! NO! NO! AAAAGH!
THE END

...NOW ALL IS PEACEFUL IN SPRINGFIELD... FOR THERE IS NO MORE GOSSIP... THEY HAVE LEARNED THAT THOU SHALT... HEAR NO EVIL... SEE NO EVIL... SPEAK NO EVIL!
The End

...AND I AM NOT A NUT BAG

DIGITAL COMICS PRESERVATION

RIPPING
SCANNING
ARCHIVING COMICS

WHY? — BECAUSE I'M THE DEVIL'S ALLY, THAT'S WHY! HE, AND THE REST OF THESE LITTLE MONSTERS ARE MY FRIENDS! YOU UNDERSTAND, FRIENO?
HE-HE-
HE

IF YOU LIKE IT
AND HAVE THE MEANS TO DO SO
PURCHASE A PHYSICAL COPY
HELP YOUR LOCAL COMIC BOOK SHOPS!

READ MORE COMICS